

A CRITICAL
R E V I E W

O F T H E
PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
STATUES and ORNAMENTS

In, and about

London and Westminster.

To which is prefix'd,

The Dimensions of St. *Peter's*
Church at *Rome*, and St. *Paul's*
Cathedral at *London*.

*By James Ralph **

L O N D O N :

Printed by C. ACKERS in St. *John's-street*, for J. WILFORD
behind the *Chapter-House* in St. *Paul's Church-yard*, and
J. CLARKE at the *Golden Ball* in *Duck-lane*. 1734.

A CRITICAL
REVIEW

OF THE
PUBLIC BUILDINGS

ST. JAMES'S PLACE



The Dimensions of
Church, at New, and St. James's
Cathedral at London



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
EARL of *Burlington*,
Knight of the Most Noble Order of
the Garter.

My Lord,



THE design of this dedication is not to do honour to you, but myself; neither is it made by choice, but necessity: for, as I always intended to inscribe these papers to the greatest genius, and most finish'd judge, 'twas impossible I could address them to any body else.

Were they upon any other subject but *architecture* and *publick ornaments*, I should think my self oblig'd to make some apology for the liberty I have taken; but, as they

DEDICATION.

they treat of those only, the publick would believe that no apology could justify me for not making you their patron.

You, my Lord, have, in a manner, a natural right to all acknowledgments of this kind; 'tis owing to you that taste and elegance are so much the fashion, and so well understood; your example has given a sanction to science; and even the vanity of being like you, has made as many converts to its cause, as a thorough love, and veneration for its excellencies.

I can't tell under which class of admirers I am to be rang'd, but this I am certain of, I only describe what you execute, and, like the critick to the poet, only apply the rules in theory, which you reduce into practice.

After this confession, my Lord, I know it will be expected that my remarks should bear in them the same characteristicks of harmony and beauty, as distinguish the compositions on which they are founded; or else it will be said I have set up a standard to condemn myself. I know there is much reason to be afraid of this consequence; but as every body will grant my first principles right, they may compliment my judgment so far at least, and, if I have err'd in the application, it may be recollected still in my favour, that few
pu-

DEDICATION.

pupils make a figure in company with their master.

At a time, my Lord, when so much money is lavish'd in building, and too often with so little pretence to beauty, or magnificence, it could not be unseasonable to publish some hints on a subject so frequently employ'd, and so seldom understood: I grant, indeed, if buildings could be read as easily as books, there would be no need of any comment of mine, and your Lordship's plans would be of more service to the world, than the most refin'd speculations. But as few have a like talent of laying out their fortunes with propriety, or making their own private judgment a publick ornament, I have ventur'd to warn them of the danger of attempting what they are not equal to, or declaring their weakness at their own expence.

Folly in building is one of the most lasting reflections on a man's character, because 'tis not only universally known in his own time, but is often perpetuated thro' many generations.

It is incumbent, therefore, on every man of quality and fortune, to weigh very seriously every undertaking of this nature, and not precipitate himself into an expence, that neither convenience, or grandeur can justify.

The

DEDICATION.

The way to do this most effectually, is to consult the models your Lordship has oblig'd the publick with, and then they will learn that beauty is first founded in simplicity, and harmony; and magnificence in propriety of ornament, and nobleness of imagination.

I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's Most Obedient,

And Most Devoted

Humble Servant,

Jas: Ralph
Author of an New England
other works.



PREFACE.

BEING

An ESSAY on TASTE.



*W*HAT we understand by taste, is the peculiar relish that we feel for any agreeable object; and is more or less perfect, according to the degree of judgment we employ in distinguishing its beauties. It ought always to be founded on truth, or verisimilitude at least; but we often find it to be only the child of opinion, or the mere result of accident. True taste is not to be acquire'd without infinite toil and study; and we are generally too indolent to accept of an advantage on such terms. This is the real occasion, why a false one is so apt to prevail, and, on

a division of mankind, would number three to one in its own favour. All men are fond of being esteem'd witty, wise, or learned; but are willing to procure their reputation as easily as possible. They have sense enough to observe how cheaply this is acquir'd by humour and fashion, to the prejudice of true understanding, and genuine politeness; and how zealous we are in promoting the follies we intend to practise. Like men of much ambition, and narrow fortune, we counterfeit the gaiety we can never purchase; and frugally flatter ourselves, that our tinsel will be mistaken for the real gold it was intended to imitate. I am sorry 'tis in my power, to appeal to numberless facts for the truth of this assertion. Nothing is so common, as the affectation of taste; and hardly any thing is so seldom found. Indeed the misfortune is infectious, and variety of incidents agree to make it almost universal. Bad principles of education, when young; an ill choice of acquaintance at entering into the world; the ignorance of those that undertake to inform us, and continual prejudices of our own. But the frequency, or confirmation of an evil, should never discourage us from endeavouring to surmount it; and if 'tis grown quite desperate, there is the more necessity for opposing it with the greater vigour. There is so much depends on a true taste, with regard to elegance, and even to morality, that I can't resist the temptation

P R E F A C E.

iii

tation of throwing in my mite to the publick, and recommending, to the utmost of my power, what I judge to be of so much advantage. The design of schools, the use of universities, the benefit of conversation, should all centre in this great point ; and no one can properly be stiled a gentleman, who has not made use of every opportunity to enrich his own capacity, and settle the elements of taste, which he may improve at leisure. There are numbers of persons, who may justly claim reputation for a single excellence, that in all others are defective, and inconsiderable, for the want of this general accomplishment. A good taste is the heightner of every science, and the polish of every virtue : 'tis the friend of society, and the guide to knowledge : 'tis the improvement of pleasure, and the test of merit. By this, we enlarge the circle of enjoyment, and refine upon happiness. It enables us to distinguish beauty, wherever we find it, and detect error in all its disguises. It obliges us to behave with decency and elegance, and quickens our attention to the good qualities of others : In a word, 'tis the assemblage of all propriety, and the centre of all that's amiable.

Truth and beauty include all excellence ; and together with their opposites, are the only objects for the exercise of our censure, or admiration. The rightly distinguishing of them, is the proof of a good taste, and what naturally leads to the perfection of judgment and apprehension.

prehension. Truth, should be consider'd as the design in painting; and beauty, the colouring and decoration. Falsehood and deformity, are the contrasts of the groupe; and to be able to detect the one, we should be capable of admiring the other. The mind, which is always employ'd in contemplating the first, or condemning the last, will be partial in its knowledge, and unjust in its decision. Prejudice, on either side, is foreign to a good taste; and yet, thro' the frailty of human nature, both may meet in the same person together.

To acquire that excellence perfectly, therefore, we must be impartial in our enquiry, and cool in our judgment; quick to apprehend, and ready to determine what is an error, and what a beauty; carefully examining, when we condemn, if the defect is not in our mind; and when we praise, whether we truly understand the object of our approbation. Many a mistake has been made by not observing this rule. Beauties have been censur'd, for want of understanding; and errors extoll'd, because in the masque of truth.

To reduce these hints into practice, I would again observe, that the influence of a good taste is to be extended much farther than is generally imagin'd. 'Tis not confin'd only to writings of every kind, but intimately regards painting and sculpture, comprehends the whole circle of civility and good manners, and regulates life and conduct, as well as
theory

P R E F A C E.

v

theory and speculation. In every one of these relations, 'tis always to be observed, both in judging and acting. For want of it, in all, we daily see a thousand absurdities, that politeness would be ashamed of, and reason condemn. Pertness passes for wit; dulness for decorum; lewdness for humour; dissimulation for honour; and vanity for every accomplishment.

'Tis hard to determine whether there is an eternal difference in the essence of souls, or whether they exert themselves, more or less vigorously, in proportion to the delicacy of the organs of the body they inform; or whether the force of education, habit, or society, gives a superior turn to the genius that possesses these advantages.

'Tis certain there is a wide difference in men, and, whatever is the cause, some are distinguish'd by so many perfections as almost elevate them above the rank of their fellow-creatures, and set them at an awful distance for the vulgar of mankind to wonder at. But how great soever is the capacity, infinite toil and labour are necessary to form it into beauty, and regularity; so many difficulties are to be surmounted, so many mortifications are to be endur'd, and such a labyrinth of knowledge is to be struggled thro', that, were not ambition to prompt us, and vanity to flatter, scarce one in a thousand would have the courage to undertake so arduous a task, and not one in five hun-

hundred of them, have the resolution or address to accomplish the end they had in view. The very prospect would frighten us from attempting it; or passion, or indolence hinder our attaining it: but very few arrive even at the point they propos'd. None can say they have finish'd their journey; knowledge is infinite, and, when mortality has spun out its latest thread in the pursuit, we look forward with astonishment at the unbounded scene before us, and backward with contempt at the little portion our whole lives could compass. Nature seems to have done as much for us as we can do for ourselves, and the utmost of our endeavours can be little more than to regulate, and polish the hints that arise from her. What is learning but a collection of that knowledge which nature had inspir'd? and what politeness, but a refinement on those pleasures which she has dictated? Let us look upon the grave and serious among the vulgar, and we shall see oeconomy and morality in miniature, and both as perfect as is needful to their circumstance. Let us observe the frolick and gay, and their pleasures are the same as ours, and have the decorings of elegance as well. Has refin'd and modish luxury a single enjoyment that they don't admire, and imperfectly imitate? Let us pursue this thought a little farther, and we shall find our poetry, painting, statuary, and musick indulg'd among them; and, as in their original,

nal, labouring for perfection. *What gathers together the numerous crowds that listen to a wretched song in every street; but the rapture which poetry never fails to inspire, and that softness of heart which engages the attention, and charms every faculty? Why are their walls hung with scurvy pictures; but because their hearts delight in every imitation of nature, and whatever they are fond of they are willing to possess? For statuary they have images of wax, and earth, and clay, in abundance, made fine with painting and gilding, to atone for the want of true beauty, and real excellency. How many of them are so enchanted with musick, as to make it the business of their lives, and sometimes practise it with success? All in general bear witness to its power, and, like Amphion's stocks and stones, are transported with harmony. Such is the mechanical influence that the rudest sketch of beauty and pleasure has upon the most low and uncultivated minds, and so general is the confession of all mankind in their favour! I think I may be indulg'd too in recommending this thought to men of education and quality. I think such studies, and such employments would afford them more satisfaction than the present mode of diversions, and would be far more worthy of their characters. Nature, 'tis plain, points them out to their consideration, and their own stations in life should make them their inseparable companions. But instead of that, I speak it with great concern, there are very few who have not strove to mortify their relish for them, and done a violence to nature, in compliment to fashion. Gaming and horse-races are now the amusements in vogue; and there are few who have courage enough to declare against them, even tho' they are contrary to their inclinations. True politeness seems in dis-*
grace

grace with mankind, and 'tis absurd to be its advocate. Where is the person who glories in being her admirer, in stemming the torrent of barbarism in an abandon'd age, and doing justice to learning and virtue? Where is the guardian genius to merit, its nurse, its patron, its friend, its father? Hence it is, that folly and affectation become universal; and elegance and knowledge are so little regarded. The man, with half a head, appears as wise now, as Janus of old, with two. The imaginary difference of stature, between the moderns and the antediluvians, is hardly more remarkable, than the real diminution of the wit of this age, in comparison with the last. We are quite degenerating to Lilliputians; a race of Dapperwits; and there is not above a hair's breadth difference, between us and our leaders. If any of my readers should be vain enough to disbelieve me, I refer him to my pupils for demonstration. In short, the man who ventures barely to recommend a good taste, is gaz'd at as a monster; the growth of another clime; and without question we should be glad of a new Don Quixote, to destroy him as an enemy to our repose.



[illegible]

To the AUTHOR of the Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, &c.

S I R,

I HAVE read with much Pleasure your ESSAY, which has, on examining your Reasons, convinced many of the Beauties and Absurdities in Architecture in most of our public Edifices; a Work all, who have that Taste, could wish pursued. The enclosed Measures were taken at a private Expence, and afterwards a very few printed, at the same, none published; and as they relate to two of the largest modern Fabricks in Europe, the one, St. Peter's; which (tho' rais'd on different Designs, at several Times, and by as different Architects, all the greatest Ornaments of the several Ages in which they flourish'd) yet such is the Harmony and Proportion observed in all Parts thereof, that it is confessedly the most magnificent Pile since the Revival of Arts the World can boast; and, besides all the additional beauty of a Variety of antient Marble of Egypt and Greece, improved by the Genius's of Builder and Sculptor, the Area before it, and Corridores on each Side, gives us the due Distance, and at the same Time leave gradually to admire the several Beauties as we approach. Whether in Height, Length, Breadth, &c. both this and St. Paul's are in their just Proportion, by this Scheme may be seen; which is submitted to your better Judgment, whether fit for the Publick or the Flames.

I am, S I R, Your unknown Admirer, A. B.

The Measures of St. Peter's Church are taken out of the authentick Dimensions of the best Architects of Rome, and compared upon the Place, with the Italian and English Measures.

T H E DIMENSIONS of St. Peter's Church at Rome, and St. Paul's Cathedral, at London; as taken in the Year 1725.

The Dimensions of St. Paul's Cathedral are taken from several Prints engraved by Tho. Platt, H. Hulsberg, J. Simon, B. Sans, and John Harris.

The PLAN, or Length and Breadth.	ROMAN PALMS.		FEET.		Difference in FEET.	
	St. Peter	St. Paul.	St. Peter	St. Paul	Plan	Height
The whole Length of the Church and Poreh	1000	685 $\frac{1}{2}$	729	500	229	97 $\frac{1}{2}$
The whole Length of the Crofs	700	343	510	250	260	67 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Breadth of the Front with the Turrets	500	247	364	180	184	40
The Breadth of the Front without the Turrets	300	151	318	110	208	41
The Breadth of the Church and three Naves	350	178	255	130	125	5
The Breadth of the Church and widest Chapels	500	147	364	180	184	6
The Length of the Poreh within	300	68	218	50	168	5
The Breadth of the Poreh within	55	27	40	20	20	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Length of the Platea at the upper Steps	400	137	291	100	191	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Breadth of the Nave at the Door	120	55	67	40	47	
The Breadth of the Nave at the third Pillar, and Tribuna	100	55	73	40	33	
The Breadth of the Side Isles	40	23	29	17	12	
The Distance between the Pillars of the Nave	60	34	44	25	19	
The Breadth of the same double Pillars at St. Peter's	40	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	29			4
The Breadth of the same single Pillars at St. Paul's		13 $\frac{1}{2}$		10		
The two right Sides of the great Pilasters of the Cupola	90	48 : 34	65 : 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	25 : 35		
The Distance between the same Pilasters	100	54 $\frac{1}{2}$	72	40	32	
The outward Diameter of the Cupola	260	199	189	145	44	13
The inward Diameter of the same	190	137	138	100	38	3
The Breadth of the Square by the Cupola	60		43			8
The Length of the same	450		328			10 $\frac{1}{2}$
From the Door within to the Cupola	430	260	313	190	123	39
From the Cupola to the End of the Tribuna	230	233	167	170		40
The Breadth of each of the Turrets	140	48	77	35	42	6
The outward Diameter of the Lantern	50	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	36	18	18	4
The whole Space, upon which one Pillar stands	8100	1200	5906	875		7
The whole Space, upon which all the Pillars stand	32400	9600	23625	7000		3

The HEIGHT.	FEET.		ROMAN PALMS.		Difference in PALMS.
	St. Peter	St. Paul	St. Peter	St. Paul	
From the Ground without to the Top of the Crofs	437 $\frac{1}{2}$	340	600	466	134
The Turrets as they were at St. Peter's and are at St. Paul's	289 $\frac{1}{2}$	222	597	304	293
To the Top of the highest Statues on the Front	175	135	240	185	55
The first Pillars of the Corinthian Order	74	33	102	45	57
The Breadth of the same	9	4	12	5	7
Their Basis and Pedestals	19	13	26	17	9
Their Capital	10	5	14	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Architrave, Frize, and Cornice	19	10	26	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Composite Pillars at St. Paul's and Toscan at St. Peter's	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	25	35	34	1
The Ornaments of the same Pillars above, and below	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	16	20	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Triangle of the Mezzo Relievo, with its Cornice	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	30	24	6
Wide	92	74			
The Basis of the Cupola to the Pedestals of the Pillars	36 $\frac{1}{2}$	38	50	52	2
The Pillars of the Cupola	32	28	44	38	6
Their Basis and Pedestals	4	5	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Their Capitals, Architrave, Frize, and Cornice	12	12	16	16	
From the Cornice to the outward Slope of the Cupola	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	40	35	54	19
The Lantern from the Cupola to the Ball	63	50	86	68	18
The Ball in Diameter	9	6	12	8	4
The Crofs with its Ornaments below	14	6	19	8	11
The Statues upon the Front with their Pedestals	25 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	35	20	15
The outward Slope of the Cupola	89	50	122	68	54
The Cupola and Lantern from the Cornice of the Front to the Top of the Crofs	280	240	384	329	55
The Height of the Niches in the Front	20	14	27	19	8
Wide	9	5	12	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
The first Windows in the Front	20	13	27	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wide	10	7	14	9	5



A CRITICAL
REVIEW

OF THE

Publick BUILDINGS, STATUES and
ORNAMENTS of *LONDON*
and *WESTMINSTER*.



Nothing contributes more to the grandeur and magnificence of a city, than noble and elegant buildings, so nothing produces an heavier censure on a nation's taste, than those which are otherwise : 'tis for this reason highly laudable to stir up the publick to an attention to such elegant and proper decorations as these, not only in regard to the fame of the people in general, but their interest too. One of the

B

chief

chief reasons why *Italy* is so generally visited by all foreigners of genius and distinction, is owing to the magnificence of their structures, and their number and variety : they are a continual bait to invite their neighbours to lay out their money amongst them, and one may reasonably assert, that the sums which have been expended for the bare sight of those elegant piles, have more than paid the original charge of their building. This *Lewis XIV.* was sufficiently apprized of when he undertook *Versailles*, and the company that single fabrick only has drawn into *France*, has made that crown ample amends for the expence of erecting it ; and they have both the use and reputation of it still into the bargain.

'Tis high time therefore for us to look about us too, and endeavour to vie with our neighbours in politeness, as well as power and empire. Towards the end of King *James I's* reign, and in the beginning of his son's, taste made a bold step from *Italy* to *England* at once, and scarce stay'd a moment to visit *France* by the way. From the most profound ignorance in architecture, the most consummate night of knowledge, *Inigo Jones* started up a prodigy of art, and vied even with his master *Palladio* himself. From so glorious an out-set, there was not any excellency that we might not have hoped to obtain ; *Britain* had a reasonable prospect to rival *Italy*, and foil every nation in *Europe* beside. But in the midst of these sanguine expectations, the fatal civil war commenced,

menc'd, and all the arts and sciences were immediately laid aside, as no way concerned in the quarrel. What followed was all darkness and obscurity, and 'tis even a wonder they left us a monument of the beauty, 'twas so agreeable to their natures to destroy.

Wren was the next genius that arose, to awake the spirit of science, and kindle in his country a love for that science which had been so long neglected: during his time a most melancholy opportunity offered for art to exert itself, in the most extraordinary manner: but the calamities of the present circumstance were so great and numerous, that the pleas of elegance and beauty could not be heard, and necessity and conveniency took place of harmony and magnificence.

What I mean is this; the fire of *London* furnished the most perfect occasion that can ever happen in any city, to rebuild it with pomp and regularity: this *Wren* foresaw, and, as we are told, offered a scheme for that purpose which would have made it the wonder of the world. He proposed to have laid out one large street from *Aldgate* to *Temple-Bar*, in the middle of which was to have been a large square, capable of containing the new church of *St. Paul's*, with a proper distance for the view all round it; whereby that huge building would not have been cooped up, as 'tis at present, in such a manner, as no where to be seen to advantage at all; but would have had a long and ample vista at each end, to have recon-

4 *A Critical Review of the*

ciled it to a proper point of view, and give it one great benefit which, in all probability, it must now want for ever. He farther proposed to rebuild all the parish-churches in such a manner as to be seen at the end of every vista of houses, and dispersed in such distances from each other, as to appear neither too thick, nor thin in prospect; but give a proper heightening to the whole bulk of the city, as it filled the landscape. Lastly, he proposed to build all the houses uniform, and supported on a piazza, like that of *Covent-Garden*; and, by the water-side, from the *Bridge* to the *Temple*, he had planned a long and broad wharf, or key, where he designed to have ranged all the halls that belong to the several companies of the city, with proper ware-houses for merchants between, to vary the edifices, and make it at once one of the most beautiful and most useful ranges of structure in the world.—But, as I said before, the hurry of rebuilding, and the disputes about property prevented this glorious scheme from taking place.

In our own times an opportunity offered to adorn the city, in some degree; and though the scarcity of ground in *London* will not allow as much beauty of situation as one would desire, yet if the buildings were suited to their place, they would make a better figure than they do at present. I have now the late new churches in my eye; amongst all which there are not five placed to advantage, and scarce so many which are built

in taste, or deserve half the money which they have cost ; a circumstance which must reflect on the judgments of those who chose the plans, as well as the genius of the architects themselves.

No nation can reproach us for want of expence in our publick buildings, but all nations may for our want of elegance and discernment in the execution. In the first place, there are very few of our fine pieces of architecture in sight ; they are generally hid in holes and corners, as if they had been built by stealth, or the artists were ashamed of their works : or else they are but essays, or trials of skill, and remain unfinished, till time himself lays them in ruins. After this, 'tis unnecessary to mention that our structures are generally heavy, disproportioned, and rather incumbered than adorned : beauty does not consist in expence, or decoration ; 'tis possible for a slight building to be very perfect, and a costly one to be very deformed : I could easily name instances of both kinds ; but, as I propose to point out to my readers most of the edifices about town, that are worth consideration on either side, I will not anticipate my design, but exemplify my meaning, as I proceed, and leave the publick to make use of it as they please.

To begin with the remotest extremity of the town : as there were no attempts, till lately, ever made there, to erect any building which might adorn it at all, there was the more necessity to be more particularly careful that the first design of
this

6 *A Critical Review of the*

this nature should not miscarry ; and yet the four following churches which have been built at *Lime-house*, *Ratcliff*, *Horsley-down*, and *Spittle-fields*, tho' they have all the advantage of ground which can be desired, are not to be looked at without displeasure. They are mere Gothique heaps of stone, without form or order ; and meet with contempt from the best and worst tastes alike. The last, especially, deserves the severest condemnation, in that 'tis built at a monstrous expence, and yet is, beyond question, one of the most absurd piles in *Europe*.

As a fabrick of antiquity, 'tis impossible to pass by the *Tower* without taking some notice of it ; particularly, as 'tis visited so much by the good people of *England*, as a place made venerable by the frequent mention which has been made of it in history, and famous for having been the scene of many tragical adventures : but I must caution those of my readers who are unskill'd in architecture, not to believe it either a place of strength, beauty, or magnificence : 'tis large and old indeed, and has a formidable row of cannons before it, to fire on rejoicing days.

The *Custom-house* is a place, which by its use and situation, can hardly fail of being visited by strangers : I could have wished therefore, on that account, and likewise because we are more famous for our naval affairs than any thing else, that this building had been more costly and magnificent : it would make a seasonable impression on foreigners,

ers, even at their landing, of the majesty and wealth of the *British* nation: to which let me add that its situation, by the water-side, gives it a still juster claim to grandeur and decoration, and 'tis pity so publick a building should want what is so remarkably mist.

I am of opinion, if the directors of the *East-India* company had thought in this manner, they would have bestowed a greater expence on their *House*, than appears in it at present: 'tis certainly unworthy their figure in the trading world, and would better suit with the common life of a single director, than the pomp and state of the whole body. The fabrick indeed is built in taste; but there is not enough of it; and, if they had thought of adding a portico in the middle, 'twould have looked more like a finished building than it does now: we might have endured it at least, tho' we could not have praised it.

The front of the church lately rebuilt in *Bishops-gate-street* is, I think, more in taste than most about town; the parts 'tis composed of are simple, beautiful, and harmonious, and the whole deserves to be admired, for pleasing so much, at so little expence.

Bedlam is very well situated in point of view, and is laid out in a very elegant taste; but, if I may presume to find fault with it, the middle is not large, or magnificent enough for the whole, and, by being exactly the same, both in size and decoration, with the wings, seems even less, and more inconsiderable

8 *A Critical Review of the*

siderable than it really is. Neither do the additions make any amends for this inconvenience, or appear of a piece with the rest: the near neighbourhood of *Moorgate* too is something of a blemish to this pile, because 'tis built in the same stile with it, and yet is so far detached in its situation, that it puzzles the spectator to distinguish them asunder, or reconcile them to each other.----The late removal of the wall, and entrance farther from the building has a fine effect, and the statues on top can never be sufficiently admired, or praised: I am of opinion no fabrick in *Europe* can boast finer, either as to propriety of place, or excellency of workmanship.

From hence we may pass on to the *South-Sea-House*, and there we shall have some reason to wonder that, when the taste of building is so much improved among us, we see so little sign of it here: at the same expence, they might have raised an edifice, which would have charmed the most profound judges: beauty is as cheap as deformity, with respect to the pocket; but 'tis easier to find money than genius, and that's the reason so many build, and so few succeed.

The tower of *St. Michael's Cornhill*, tho' in the Gothic stile of architecture, is undoubtedly a very magnificent pile of building, and deserves very justly to be esteemed the finest thing of that sort in *London*.

The *Monument* is undoubtedly the noblest modern column in the world; nay, in some respects
it

it may justly vie with those celebrated ones of antiquity, which are consecrated to the names of *Trajan* and *Antonine*. Nothing can be more bold and surprizing, nothing more beautiful and harmonious: the bas relief at the base, allowing for some few defects, is finely imagin'd, and executed as well: and nothing material can be cavill'd with, but the inscriptions round about it. Nothing, indeed, can be more ridiculous than its situation, unless the reason which is assigned for so doing. I am of opinion if it had been rais'd where *Cheapside-Conduit* stood, it would have been as effectual a remonstrance of the misfortune it is design'd to record, and would at once have added an inexpressible beauty to the vista, and received as much as it gave.

As some people are ignorant enough to admire the *Bridge* merely because 'tis incumber'd with houses from end to end; 'twill not be amiss to observe that nothing can be more ridiculous than this invention, nothing can possibly offend the eye more, or extinguish so many beauties as might take place, in case this popular nuisance was remov'd: suppose the present structure of the *Bridge* below was still to continue as it is, there would, at least, be room for a magnificent breast-work and balustrade above, and the top would afford one of the finest prospects in the world: on one hand a fleet of merchant-ships, equal in value and importance to half a nation; on the other, two of the most

10 *A Critical Review of the*

considerable cities of *Europe*, stretching along the banks of a beautiful river, and ending with a distant view of the adjacent landscape.

The *Royal-Exchange* is the next structure of any consequence which demands our attention, and here, as in most costly fabricks, there is something to blame, and something to admire: a building of that extent, grandeur, and elevation, ought, without question, to have had an ample area before it, that we might comprehend the whole, and every part at once: this is a requisite which ought to be allow'd to all buildings, but particularly all of this sort; that is to say, such as are form'd of very large parts; for in such a case the eye is forc'd to travel with pain and difficulty from one object to another, nay sometimes oblig'd to divide one into many parts; whereby the judgment is confus'd, and 'tis, with great uncertainty, we come to any conclusion at all. Upon the whole, the entrance into this building is very grand and august; the two statues which adorn it are, in a particular manner, beautiful and admirable: but then the tower which arises over it is a weight to the whole building, and is, at the same time, broken into so many parts, that it rather hurts, than pleases, and, if reduc'd to one half of its present height, would harmonize abundantly better with the whole. The inside is light and airy, laid out in a very good stile, and finish'd with great propriety of decoration: I could wish tho' that either

ther the statues were executed in a better manner, or that the city would condescend to excuse the setting up any more: for nothing can be more ridiculous than to hurt the eye with a fault, in the affectation of a beauty.

The building, now erecting for the *Bank*, is liable to the very same objection, in point of place, with the *Exchange*, and even in a greater degree too: 'tis monstrously crowded on the eye, and, unless the opposite houses could be pulled down, and a view open'd into *Cornhill*, we might as well be entertain'd with a prospect of the model, thro' a microscope: as to the structure itself 'tis grand and expensive; the architect has a very good taste of beauty, and only seems to be rather too fond of decoration: this appears pretty eminently by the weight of his cornices, which appear, in my opinion, to be rather too heavy for the building; tho', upon the whole, both he, and his work, deserve abundantly more applause than censure.

'Tis but natural, in this place, to lament that ways and means could not be found out to erect this building on one side of *Stocks-Market*, and that which has been so long talk'd of for the lord mayor on the other: two such magnificent structures as these, in conjunction with the church on the remaining side, would have made this a kind of center of beauty to the city, and each had set off and adorn'd the other: it must be presum'd, of course, that the market would be remov'd,

12 *A Critical Review of the*

and the whole area laid open with all the elegance and decency which would be suitable to such a design. 'Tis impossible to quit this place without taking notice of the equestrian statue rais'd here in honour of *Charles II*: a thing in itself so exceedingly ridiculous and absurd, that 'tis not in one's power to look upon it without reflecting on the tastes of those who set it up: but, when we enquire into the history of it, the farce improves upon our hands, and, what was before contemptible grows entertaining. This statue was originally made for *John Sobieski*, king of *Poland*, but, by some accident, was left upon the workman's hands: about the same time, the city was loyal enough to pay their devoirs to king *Charles*, immediately upon his restoration; and, finding this statue ready made to their hands, resolv'd to do it the cheapest way, and convert the *Polander* into a *Briton*, and the *Turk*, underneath his horse, into *Oliver Cromwell*, to make their compliment compleat. In this very manner it appears at present, and the turbant upon the last mention'd figure is yet an undeniable proof of the truth of the story.

The church in *Walbrook*, so little known among us, is famous all over *Europe*, and is justly reputed the master-piece of the celebrated Sir *Christopher Wren*. Perhaps *Italy* itself can produce no modern building that can vie with this in taste or proportion: there is not a beauty which the plan would admit of, that is not to be found
here

here in its greatest perfection; and foreigners very justly call our judgment in question for understanding its graces no better, and allowing it no higher a degree of fame.

The steeple of *Bow* church is another masterpiece in a peculiar kind of building, which has no fix'd rules to direct it, nor is it to be reduc'd to any settled laws of beauty: without doubt if we consider it only as a part of some other building, it can be esteem'd no other than a delightful absurdity: but if either consider'd in itself, or as a decoration of a whole city in prospect, not only to be justified but admir'd. That which we have now mention'd is beyond question as perfect as human imagination can contrive or execute, and till we see it outdone, we shall hardly think it to be equal'd.

In a place like *London* where so many decorations are wanted, so few are to be found, and even so little room to encrease their number, one is forc'd to regret any opportunity which is neglected, or any space which is not improv'd as it ought. 'Tis certain that no spot is better situated for a statue, than that where *Cheapside Conduit* lately stood, and as no king ever deserv'd that honour more from his people than the immortal *William III.* I think all party-disputes ought to have been dropt, and the whole city agreed to pay a compliment to themselves in doing that justice to him.

We

14 *A Critical Review of the*

We are now come as far as where the *Conduit* formerly stood in *Cheapside*, and before I leave this place I think it proper to recommend the steeple of *Foster-lane* to the attention of the passenger; 'tis not a glaring pile that strikes the eye at the first view with an idea of grandeur and magnificence; but then the beautiful pyramid it forms, and the just and well-proportion'd simplicity of all its parts, satisfy the mind so effectually, that nothing seems to be wanting, and nothing can be spared.

Aldersgate is a building so heavy and Gothique, that it hardly deserves notice, unless for the sake of a bas relief of king *James I.* which tho' in an awkward and inelegant taste, is a very tolerable piece of workmanship, and may challenge some applause.

Farther down this street is on the right hand a most delightful fine edifice, that declares the masterly hand of *Inigo Jones*, and was formerly the residence of the earls of *Shaftsbury*. An edifice that deserves a much better situation, and greater care to preserve it from the injuries of time: but the politeness of the town is so far remov'd from hence, that 'tis hardly possible this fabrick shou'd be admir'd as it ought, or be kept in suitable repair. Already it has been converted into a tavern, and made to serve other mechanick uses, insomuch that the judicious spectator at once wonders how it came to be erected there, and laments its present decay.

The

The new church in *Old-street* is so slight and trifling a building that it is not worth the trouble of a visit ; for which reason we shall chuse rather to cross over to *Smithfield*, neglecting the *Chartreux* at the same time, because the building is so entirely rude and irregular, that it admits of nothing like criticism : its situation indeed in the midst of a garden is fine, and the square in the front of it is at least kept in better order than most in town.

In *Smithfield* we shall see a vast area, that is capable of great beauty, but is at present destitute of all ; a scene of filth and nastiness, one of the most nauseous places in the whole town : 'tis true, the use which is made of it as a market is something of an excuse for it, and in some degree atones for the want of that decency, which would improve it so much : yet still 'tis my opinion that ways and means might be found to make it tolerable at least, and an obelisk, pyramid, or statue, in the centre, defended with handsome and substantial rails, would go a great way in so desirable a project.

On one side of this irregular place is the entrance, not the front, of a magnificent hospital ; in a taste not altogether amiss, but so erroneous in point of proportion, that it rather offends than entertains : but what is still more provoking, the building itself is intirely detach'd from the entrance, and tho' so near a large and noble opening, is in a manner stifled with the circum-jacent

jacent houses: 'tis indeed a building in a box or case; and tho' beautiful in itself and erected at prodigious expence, is so far from giving pleasure to a judge, that he would rather regret its being built at all. 'Tis certain that where the ground will admit of it, publick buildings can hardly be too grand and magnificent; but where they can't be seen when finish'd, use and convenience only should be consulted, and a pile of rough stones from the quarry, would answer the end, as well as the marble of *Egypt* with the decorations of *Greece* or *Rome*.

Newgate, consider'd as a prison, is a structure of more cost and beauty than was necessary, because the sumptuousness of the out-side but aggravates the misery of the wretches within: but as a gate to such a city as *London*, it might have received considerable additions both of design and execution, and abundantly answer'd the cost in the reputation of building. The gate of a city which is erected rather for ornament than use, ought to be in the stile of the antient triumphal arches, and it must be allow'd that hardly any kind of building allow'd of more beauty or perfection.

The *Physicians College*, a structure little known and seldom talk'd of, is a building of wonderful delicacy, and eminently deserves to be consider'd among the noblest ornaments of this city; and yet so unlucky is its situation, that it can never be seen to advantage, nay seldom seen at all, and

and what ought to be conspicuous to every body, is known only to a few, and those too people of curiosity, who search out their own entertainments, and don't want for the impressions of vulgar reports or common fame, to excite their attention or influence their judgments.

The hall of justice at the *Old Bailey*, and indeed all the courts I have ever yet seen in *England* are justly to be excepted to, as wanting that grandeur, that augustness, that decency, and solemnity which ought to be inseparable from them, in order to give men in general a suitable awe for the place, and strike offenders with a terror, even more forcible than the sentence they were to undergo. The form of a theatre agrees best with a place of this nature: that part of the building which is the stage, would answer exactly for the bench, the pit for the council, prisoners, &c. and the circle round it, for the spectators: but the present form of these assemblies is utterly opposite to this regularity, and instead of representing the whole in one grand and comprehensive view, divides it into meanness and confusion.

The grand cathedral of *St. Paul's* is undoubtedly one of the most magnificent modern buildings in *Europe*; all the parts of which 'tis compos'd are superlatively beautiful and noble; the north and south fronts in particular are very perfect pieces of architecture, neither ought

east to go without due applause. The two spires at the west end are in a finish'd taste, and the portico with the ascent, and the dome that rises in the centre of the whole, afford a very august and surprizing prospect; but still, with all these beauties, it has certainly yet more defects; and the pleasure we receive from the first is so much qualified and tam'd by the last, that we rather wonder how we can be pleased so much, than why we are displeased at all. But not to condemn in the gross, I'll take the liberty to touch upon a few particulars, and lay myself justly open to censure, in case I mistake, or blame in the wrong place.

In the first place therefore, there is a most notorious deficiency in point of view; such a huge fabrick as *St. Paul's* ought at least to be survey'd at the distance of *Temple-Bar*, and the vista ought to be considerably wider than the front of the building. But this is so far from the case here, that we can't see it till we are upon it, and this defect is still made worse by turning the edifice from the eye even where it can be view'd, for the sake of that ridiculous superstition of erecting it due east and west. In the next place, the dividing the portico, and indeed the whole structure into two stories on the outside, certainly indicates a like division within: a circumstance abounding with absurdities, and defeating even the very end of erecting it at all. If indeed the architect had been embarrass'd to recon-

reconcile the distance and height of his columns, I am humbly of opinion that a light and proper *Attick* story had answer'd all ends both of use and beauty, and left him room to have enlarged his imagination, and have given an air of majesty to the whole: let me add that I apprehend the portico should have been farther projected on the eye, instead of retreating from it, in order to have given a grand contraste to the whole front, and aided the perspective within.

I shall say no more on the outside than this, that according to my best notions of regularity and order, the dome should have been raised exactly in the centre of the whole, and that there should have been two corresponding steeples at the east as well as the west end, with all other suitable decorations: if a view of the whole length of the building too could have been opened to the water-side, it would have added greatly to its grandeur and magnificence, and have afforded a most noble prospect from off the river into the bargain. However odd or new the first of these propositions may seem, let any body take a view of *St. Paul's* from any of the neighbouring hills, and they will instantly discern that the building is defective, and that the form of a cross is more favourable to superstition than beauty: in a word, they will easily see at least, that the dome, in its present circumstance, is abundantly too big for the rest of the pile, and that the west end has no rati-

20 *A Critical Review of the*

onal pretence to finer and more splendid decorations than the east.

Before we begin our examen of the inside of *St. Paul's*, it will not be amiss to cast an eye on the statue in the area before it, erected in honour of the late queen. It stands exactly in the front of the building, tho' it seems by the odd situation of *Ludgate-street*, to be on one side, and is upon the whole modell'd in a tolerable taste, and executed as well: the principal figure indeed, the queen herself, is an exception to this character; such a formal Gothique habit, and stiff, affected attitude, are neither to be endur'd or pardon'd; and there is not one of those round the base that does not justly deserve the preference.

Whoever understands the nature of publick ornamental buildings critically, always lays it down for a rule, that they cannot be too expensive or magnificent; for which reason *St. Paul's* is so far from being admir'd for being so grand and august as it is, that nothing is more common than to hear it censur'd for not being more so. Every body knows that the fund which raised it from its ruins to its present glory, was equal to any design of beauty or majesty; and as those who had it in trust went so far towards this necessary end, 'tis a thousand pities they did not carry it on much farther, and make this pile not only the ornament of *Britain*, but the admiration and envy of all *Europe*. *St. Peter's*

at

at *Rome* was already built; a model which the most finish'd architect need not have been ashamed to imitate, and as all its particular beauties have been long publickly known and admir'd, I think it was incumbent on us to have equall'd it at least; and if we had excell'd it too, it would have been no more than might have been reasonably expected from such a nation as ours, and such a genius as *Wren*.

On these principles it is that men of taste and understanding are surpriz'd at entring this church, to see so many faults, and miss so many beauties: they discover at once that it wants elevation to give it a proportionable grandeur, and length to assist the perspective: that the columns are heavy and clumsy to a prodigious degree, and rather incumber the prospect, than enrich it with symmetry and beauty: half the necessary breaks of light and shadow are hereby wanting, and half the perspective in general cut off: at the same time I don't deny but many parts of the decoration are exceedingly grand and noble, and demand very justly a sincere applause. The dome is without question a very stupendous fabrick, and strikes the eye with an astonishing pleasure: 'tis indeed one of those happy kinds of building that please all kinds of people alike, from the most ignorant clown up to the most accomplish'd gentleman: but yet even here the judge cannot help taking notice that it bears no proportion to the rest of the building,

22 *A Critical Review of the*

building, and that after you have seen this, you can look at no other part of it; whereas a judicious builder would husband his imagination, and still have something in reserve to delight the mind, tho' nothing perhaps could be contriv'd to surprize after it.

For example, the very nature of a choir would not admit of any thing so marvellous as the dome, yet it might have relieved the eye with something equivalently beautiful; the entrance in front might have been more noble and uniform; either compos'd of wood entirely, or marble; for the present mixture of both makes a disagreeable piece of patch-work, that rather disgusts than entertains: the opening on the inside thro' the present beautiful range of stalls, might have terminated in a much more magnificent alcove than we see there at present, adorn'd with all the elegance and profusion of decoration: the altar should have been rais'd of the richest marble in the most expensive taste; that it might have been of a piece with the rest of the church, and terminated the view of the whole, with all the graces of the most luxuriant imagination. All the intermediate spaces should have been fill'd up with the noblest historical paintings; all the majesty of frieze-work, cornices, and carving, heighten'd with the most costly gildings, should have been lavish'd to adorn it; and one grand flow of magnificent curtain depended from the windows, to finish and adorn the same.

Thus

Thus have I been free enough to give my impartial opinion of *St. Paul's*; I hope not too presumptuously, and if ignorantly, let every reader's private judgment set me right.

Fond as I am of gates, and indeed all sorts of buildings that may be made publick ornaments, I can't help wishing that *Ludgate* was intirely demolish'd; for at present it only serves to hide *St. Paul's*, which would be a far nobler termination of the street, and actually wants a proper point of view to survey it to advantage.

I own myself much pleased with the design of filling up *Fleet-Ditch*; 'twill be turning a nuisance into an ornament; no place about *London* may be made a finer street, or is better situated for publick regards.

The steeple of *St. Bride's*, at first sight, appears to a good deal of advantage; but on ever so slight an examination, we conclude it wants variety, and the first and last order are almost the same.

St. Andrew's, Holborn, has the advantage of a very good situation, but then it deserves it as little as any modern church in the whole city. The tower is even below criticism, but the inside of the building makes amends for the awkwardness of the out; and is really as neat, and well-finish'd, as the manner and taste it is form'd in will allow.

St. Dunstan's in Fleet-street is but an incumbrance to the way; without having any thing
but

but deformity itself, it spoils the beauty of the whole street, and hides the prospect of *Temple-Bar*, which would terminate the view very advantageously, and be seen almost as far again as it is at present. *Temple-Bar* is indeed the handsomest gate about town, and deserves some degree of applause: if it has any fault, 'tis this, that the top being round as well as the arch underneath, the whole wants that contrast of figure which is so essential to beauty and taste. The statues on the outside are good, their only disadvantage is the hurry of the place where they are to be view'd, which makes it dangerous to be curious, and prevents the attention to them which they would otherwise command.

The structure of the *Temple-Gate* is in the stile of *Inigo Jones*, and very far from inelegant; I wish I could say the same of the different detachments of building which belong to it; but that is far from being in my power, nor ever can or will: the property is so divided and subdivided, that 'tis next to impossible that any agreement should ever be made in favour of harmony and decoration. 'Tis certain that nothing can be finer situated than the *Temple*, along the side of the river, and if we consider the elevation of the ground, and how far it extends, the most barren invention can't fail of conceiving the uses it might be put to, and the beauties it would admit of. At present there is but one thing which is worth observing in
the

the *Temple*, and that is the old church which belong'd to the *Knights Templars* of *Jerusalem*; and the out-side even of this is covered from the view, that the whole might be of a piece. The inside indeed is yet visible, and may justly be esteem'd one of the best remains of Gothique architecture in this city. The form of it is very singular; you enter first into a large circular tower, which a-top terminates in something like a dome, and has a very good effect on the eye; beyond, opposite to the entrance, the church extends itself in three isles, and is built and finish'd with as much elegance and proportion as the taste of those days would allow.

From the *Temple* 'tis but a natural step to *Lincoln's-Inn*: but, by the way, 'tis worth a stranger's curiosity to visit the habitation of the *Master of the Rolls*; which is certainly built with elegance and convenience, and can be blam'd in nothing but its situation; which is undoubtedly as bad as the building itself is good.

Lincoln's-Inn may reasonably boast of one of the neatest squares in town; and tho' it is imperfect on one side, yet that very defect produces a beauty, by giving a prospect to the gardens, which fill the space to abundantly more advantage. I may safely add, that no area any where is kept in better order, either for cleanliness and beauty by day, or illuminations and decorum by night: the fountain in the middle is a very

E

pretty

26 *A Critical Review of the*

pretty decoration, and if it was still kept playing, as it was some years ago, 'twould preserve its name with more propriety, and give greater pleasure into the bargain.

The out-side of the chapel, belonging to this society, is a very good piece of Gothique architecture, and the painting on the windows has a great many admirers within: in my opinion, indeed, it does not deserve quite so much applause as it has receiv'd; because the designs are poor, the faces have little expression, and there is little reason, beside a blind regard to antiquity, to extol them at all. The raising this chapel on pillars, affords a pleasing, melancholy walk underneath, and by night, particularly, when, illuminated by the lamps, it has an effect that may be felt, but not describ'd.

The gardens are far from being admirable, but then they are convenient; and considering their situation, cannot be esteem'd too much. There is something hospitable too, in laying them open to publick use; and while we share in their pleasures, we have no title to arraign their taste.

As I find my business increase upon my hands, as I come nearer the polite end of the town, I shall be oblig'd to divide it into three distinct walks, that it may appear in something like method, and be a better guide to the stranger, or man of taste and curiosity: in the first I propose to go from *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* to the
end

end of *Piccadilly*; in the second from *Temple-Bar* to *Westminster*; and in the last from *Gray's-Inn* to *Grosvenor-square*.

From the terrass of *Lincoln's-Inn Gardens*, we have a prospect of one of the largest squares in *Europe*: it was originally laid out by the masterly hand of *Inigo Jones*, and intended to have been built all in the same stile and taste: but by the miscarriage of this, and many other such noble designs, there is too much reason to believe that *England* will never be able to produce people of taste enough to be of the same mind, or unite their sentiments for the publick ornament and reputation. Several of the original houses still remain to be a reproach to the rest; and I wish the disadvantageous comparison had been a warning to others to have avoided the like mistake.

The Duke of *Ancafter's* house is built on the abovementioned model of *Inigo Jones*, but so elevated, and improv'd, as to make it more suitable to the quality of the owner: there is great simplicity and beauty in the plan itself; as much harmony and proportion in the parts 'tis compos'd of, and the decorations are well fancied, and as well disposed. The architecture, which forms the entrance into the court-yard, is grand and noble, and as singular in its taste as happy in its effect.

Sorry I am that the house adjoining to this, so lately rebuilt on the same design, is not like

it in all particulars: the alterations which have been made in it are very far from improving it; and what it has gain'd in height, it has lost in proportion, and what is added of decoration, is deviating from simplicity and beauty: the height of the roof is a blemish that the lowness of the wall and portal will hardly atone for. But, that the house suffers in itself, by these ill-judg'd refinements, is not all; it hurts the whole side of the square, which these two houses are properly the centre of, and, if they had been uniform and regular, would have justly appear'd an ornament to the whole; for 'tis my opinion that, in all squares, there should be a capital building, in the middle of each side, which should serve to fix the eye, and give the better air of magnificence to the prospect.

But this is not the only quarrel I have to *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*; the area is capable of the highest improvement, might be made a credit to the whole city, and do honour to those who live round it: whereas at present, no place can be more contemptible or forbidding; in short, it serves only as a nursery of beggars and thieves, and is a daily reflection on those who suffer it to lie in its abandon'd condition.

Great Queen-street is another instance of our national want of taste; on one side is a row of houses that *Italy* itself would not be ashamed of; on the other, all the variety of deformations that

that could be contriv'd as a foil to beauty, and the opposite of taste.

Covent-Garden would have been, beyond dispute, one of the finest squares in the universe, if finish'd on the plan that *Inigo Jones* first design'd for it ; but even this was neglected too, and if he deserves the praise of the design, we very justly incur the censure for wanting spirit to put it in execution. The piazza is grand and noble, and the super-structure it supports, light and elegant : the market in the middle may be a matter of much profit to the ground-landlord, for what I can tell ; but I am sure 'tis a great nuisance with respect to the beauty and regularity of the square, and, in a great measure, defeats the very intent it was first calculated to serve.

The church here is, without a rival, one of the most perfect pieces of architecture that the art of man can produce : nothing can possibly be imagin'd more simple, and yet magnificence itself can hardly give greater pleasure : this is a strong proof of the force of harmony and proportion ; and at the same time a demonstration that 'tis taste and not expence which is the parent of beauty : if this building can be said to have any defect, 'tis in the form and manner of the windows, which are not only in a bad gusto, but out of proportion too.

As to the theatres, there is not room to say much of either : they have no fronts to the street

30 *A Critical Review of the*

street to require grandeur or magnificence; and with regard to their insides, the old one appears to be best calculated for the convenience of speaker and hearer, and the new for splendour and admiration: the extravagant largeness of the first gallery in one, is as great an absurdity as the division in the middle of the other: the decorations on the stage on both, I am of opinion, might be much improv'd, and great care should be always taken not to decorate that side of the house next the audience so extravagantly, as to eclipse the other: *Keeping* is necessary in all things, and the first exhibition of beauty should be in so moderate a degree, as to leave continual room for additions, 'till the eye is entirely satisfied, and reason bids you close the entertainment. The figure of a satire over the pit, in the house at *Covent-Garden*, has an admirable propriety in it, and deserves more praise than all the painting beside.

Leicester-Square has nothing remarkable in it, but the inclosure in the middle, which alone affords the inhabitants round about it, something like the prospect of a garden, and preserves it from the rudeness of the populace too.

The stables in the *Meuse* are certainly a very grand and noble building, but then they are in a very singular taste; a mixture of the Rustick and the Gothique together; the middle gate is built after the first, and the towers over the two others, in the last. I will not take upon me

to determine whether this is a fault or no, or whether any other kind of building would have suited the purpose as well: but this I am sure of, that unless the other wretched buildings are pull'd down, and the corresponding wings are made to answer the bulk already rais'd; unless the area is laid out in the most just and elegant manner, and the whole laid open to the street, it will add a new reflection on our taste, for beginning so many expensive undertakings, without finishing one.

I could wish too that a view was open'd from hence to *St. Martin's Church*; I don't know any one of the modern buildings about town which better deserves such an advantage: the portico is at once elegant and august, and the steeple above it ought to be consider'd as one of the most tolerable in town: if the steps arising from the street to the front, could have been made regular, and on a line from end to end, it could have given it a very considerable grace: but as the situation of the ground would not allow it, this is to be esteemed rather a misfortune than a fault. The round columns, at each angle of the church, are very well conceiv'd, and have a very fine effect in the profile of the building: the east end is remarkably elegant, and very justly challenges a particular applause. In short, if there is any thing wanting in this fabrick, 'tis a little more elevation, which I presume is apparently wanted within, and would
create

create an additional beauty without. I can't help thinking too that, in complaisance to the galleries, the architect has revers'd the order of the windows, it being always usual to have the large ones nearest the eye, and the small by way of *Attick Story* on the top.

St. *James's-Square* has an appearance of grandeur superior to any other plan in town, and yet there is not any one elegant house in it; and the side next *Pall-Mall* is scandalously rude and irregular: 'tis from the regularity of the buildings only, the neatness of the pavement, and the beauty of the bason in the middle, that this beauty results: if the houses were built more in taste, and the four sides exactly correspondent to each other, the effect would be much more surprizing, and the pleasure arising from it more just. Beside, I can never thoroughly applaud the bason itself, till 'tis finish'd as it ought, with a statue or obelisk in the middle, worthy of the place it was to appear in, and the neighbourhood it was to adorn.

St. *James's Church* is finely situated, with regard to the prospect, on the north side of the square; and if it had been built in suitable taste, would have appeared most nobly to fill the vista, and add a pomp to the whole view: but the builders of that pile did not trouble themselves much about beauty, and I believe 'tis mere accident that even the situation itself is so favourable.

We must now pass into *Piccadilly*, where we shall be entertain'd with a sight of the most expensive wall in *England* ; I mean that before *Burlington-House*. Nothing material can be objected to it, and much may be said in its praise. 'Tis certain the height is wonderfully well proportion'd to the length, and the decorations are both simple and magnificent: the grand entrance is august and beautiful, and by covering the house entirely from the eye, gives pleasure and surprize, at the opening of the whole front with the area before it, at once. If any thing can be found fault with in this structure, 'tis this ; that the wall itself is not exactly on a line ; that the columns of the gate are merely ornamental, and support nothing at all ; that the *rustick* has not all the propriety in the world for a palace ; and that the main body of the pile is hardly equal to the out-side. But these may be rather imaginations of mine, than real imperfections ; for which reason I submit them to the consideration of wiser heads.

That side of *Arlington-street* next the *Green Park*, is one of the most beautiful situations in *Europe*, for health, convenience, and beauty: the front of the street is in the midst of the hurry and splendour of the town, and the back in the quiet and simplicity of the country. 'Tis not long since too, that the whole row was harmonious and uniform, tho' not exactly in taste ; but now, under the notion of improve-

34 *A Critical Review of the*

ment, is utterly spoilt and ruin'd, and for the sake of the prospect behind, the view before is disjointed and broke to pieces.

'Tis impossible to survey the ruins of *Devonshire-House*, without sympathizing with the noble owner, in deploring its destruction. Had his Grace's servants recollected the master's motto, *Cavendo tutus*, it had still retain'd its antient splendour; but as they did not understand the beauties of *Inigo Jones's* architecture, so they were not concern'd for its preservation. 'Tis our happiness to have remember'd it as it formerly stood, great in simplicity, and elegant in plainness; and, as nothing could have been added to improve it, nothing could be spar'd; except the prodigious number of chimnies on top, which were, indeed, a heavy, Gothique incumbrance to the whole. 'Tis surprizing, indeed, after this fatal misfortune was over, and the statue of *Britannia*, in the pediment, had escap'd the conflagration, that no one had the precaution to secure it from farther danger: 'twas the only aggravation that could take place after so severe a calamity, that this beautiful piece was suffer'd to be destroy'd, for want of due care to preserve it.

Between this and *Hyde-Park-Corner*, there is nothing more remarkable, except the shops and yards of the *Statuaries*; and sorry I am that they afford a judicious foreigner such flagrant opportunities to arraign and condemn our taste. Among a hundred statues, you shall not see one even tolerable,

lerable, either in design or execution ; nay, even the copies of the antique are so monstrously wretched, that one can hardly guess at their originals.

I will not lay the blame of this prostitution of so fine an art intirely on its professors ; no, I rather attribute it to the ignorance and folly of the buyers, who, being resolv'd to have statues in their gardens at all events, first make a wrong choice, and then resolve to purchase their follies as cheap as possible : this puts the workmen in a wrong taste of designing, and hasty, and rude in finishing : hence excellency is never thought of, and the master, like the *Highwayman* in the *Beggar's Opera*, is happy when he has turn'd his lead into gold.

I must confess, nothing is more amazing to me, than the ignorance of most of our gentry in the polite arts, and in statuary particularly ; which is so flagrant, that, among the vast number of statues, which are to be seen in the gardens of this nation, 'tis almost a miracle if you find one good one. Neither are we alone ignorant of the art itself, but even of the use of it too ; for there are as few statues well situated as chosen ; and too many have reason to blush both for the figure itself, and the end it was design'd to answer.

Nothing can be more plain, than what is meant for decoration should be beautiful in itself, and plac'd with propriety too. What excuse

36 *A Critical Review of the*

cuse then can be made for the wretched things which we see crowded on the eye; that shock, instead of affording entertainment?

In the first place, therefore, a statue should be good in itself; in the next, it should be erected to advantage; and, lastly, it should, in its own nature, be suited to the place. To compleat an area, end a vesta, adorn a fountain, or decorate a banquetting-house or alcove, is the just and natural use of statues: not to people a garden, and make a nuisance of what ought to be a beauty.

Neither is every good statue adapted to every place: the equestrian statue of a hero would suit but ill with soothing falls of water, and all the softness of *Italian* luxury; neither would the river-gods become the hurry and pomp of a nobleman's court-yard. Common sense, one would imagine, would preserve us from absurdities, like these; and yet there are so many proofs to the contrary, that we cannot be too severe in our censure, or take too much pains to bring about a reformation.

To return to our subject; I have now finish'd one of my walks from *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* to *Hyde-Park-Corner*, and, according to promise, am now to go back to *Temple-Bar*, in order to comment on the most remarkable things in my way to *Westminster*.

The first thing I have to object to in the *Strand*, is the whole body of building that extends from the

the *Butcher-Row* to the *New Church*: such a street as the *Strand*, which is the grand channel of communication between two such cities as *London* and *Westminster*, could not be too large and spacious; and without this incumbrance, and that of *Exeter-Change*, this street would have possess'd that advantage, in a very eminent degree; at least from the *Bar* to *York-Buildings*; and if it had not been adorn'd with noble and majestick structures, it would however have been considerable for its length, and capacity of being improv'd: whereas now it is incumber'd, at its very entrance, in a most scandalous degree, and, to mend the matter, too, in complaisance to the superstitious custom of a due east and west situation, they have crowded the backside of the church of *St. Clement's* into the face of the people, if I may be allow'd the expression; even tho' they had room enough to build it otherwise, and prevent so capital a nuisance. Neither does the fabrick itself make any amends for this inconvenience, by its beauty and magnificence: there appears, to me, something very fantastick in the steeple, something clumsy and too heavy in the portico, and something poor and unmeaning in the whole frame.

The *New Church* in the *Strand* is one of the strongest instances in the world, that 'tis not expence and decoration that are alone productive of harmony and taste: the *Architect* of this pile appears to have set down with a resolution of making

38 *A Critical Review of the*

making it as *fine* as possible, and, with this view, has crowded every inch of space about it with ornament: nay, he has even carried this humour so far, that it appears nothing but a cluster of ornaments, without the proper vacuities, to relieve the eye, and give a necessary contraste to the whole: he ought to have remembered that something should first appear as a plan or model to be adorn'd, and the decorations should be only subordinate to that design; the embellishments ought never to eclipse the outline, but heighten and improve it. To this we may safely add, that the dividing so small a fabrick into two lines or stories, utterly ruin'd its simplicity, and broke the whole into too many parts. The steeple is liable to as many objections as the church, 'tis abundantly too high, and, in the profile, loses all kind of proportion, both with regard to itself, and the structure it belongs to. In short, this church will always please the *ignorant*, for the very same reasons that it is sure to displease the *judge*.

I am exceedingly pleas'd with the front of the first court of *Somerſet-Houſe* next the *Strand*, as it affords us a view of the first dawning of taste in *England*: this being the only fabrick, that I know of, which deviates ever so little from the Gothique, or imitates ever so remotely the manner of the antients: here are columns, arches, and cornice that appear to have some meaning, and if proportions are neglected, if beauty is
not

not perfectly understood, if there is a strange mixture of barbarism and splendour in it, the mistakes admit of great alleviations: in all probability the architect was an *Englishman*, and this his first attempt to refine on his predecessors: perhaps he had not opportunity to review the *Italian* models, or form his judgment on the plans of the antients: at all events the *Duke*, who was at the expence of this costly undertaking, is to be applauded for setting this glorious example of a taste, till then unknown in the kingdom; for chusing so charming a situation, just in the middle of the bow, which the river forms between the *Bridge* and *Westminster*, commanding the prospect both ways, and looking direct on the fine hills of *Surrey*: 'tis not to be doubted but the new front next the gardens has greatly the advantage of the old; nothing can be conceiv'd more in taste, or better calculated to answer the view from the water, and yet even here we have the mortification to see it left unfinished; tho' a trifle more of charge would make it perfect; I mean according to the plan, on which 'twas originally design'd: for, if the most was to be made of the situation, 'tis capable of beauties, which very few others could allow. The inequality of ground, for example, leaving room to shew the upper story of the court next the *Strand*, over the top of that belonging to the gardens; and what beautiful use might be made of such an advantage, I leave to the understanding architect to imagine. To

To be sure, 'tis very far from being an ill compliment to the nobility of those times, that so many of them had their houses by the *Thames-Side*, from the *Temple* to *Whitehall*; and, I must confess, it gives me a little pain, that their successors did not think it proper, to continue their residence on the same spot: nothing could have been a nobler decoration to the prospect than a range of magnificent palaces, which, by this time, one might have reasonably expected would have been improv'd into taste, and magnificence.

York-Stairs is unquestionably the most perfect piece of building, that does honour to the name of *Inigo Jones*: 'tis plann'd in so exquisite a taste, form'd of such equal and harmonious parts, and adorn'd with such proper and elegant decorations, that nothing can be censur'd, or added. 'Tis, at once, happy in its situation, beyond comparison, and fancied in a stile exactly suited to that situation. The *rock-work*, or *rustick*, can never be better introduc'd than in buildings by the side of water; and, indeed, 'tis a great question with me, whether it ought to be made use of any where else.

Northumberland-House is very much in the Gothique taste, and, of course, cannot be suppos'd very elegant, and beautiful; and yet there is a grandeur and majesty in it that strikes every spectator with a veneration for it: this is owing intirely to the simplicity of its parts, the greatness of its extent, and the romantick air of the
four

four towers at the angles. The middle of the front next the *Strand*, is certainly much more antient than any other part of the building, and, tho' finish'd in a very expensive manner, is a very mean and trifling piece of work. It may serve indeed to preserve the idea of the original pile, and acquaint the moderns with the magnificence of their fore-fathers; but then it breaks the uniformity of the whole, and might be spar'd with more propriety, than continued.

I have taken no notice of the two *Exchanges* in the *Strand*, one of them has nothing in it to be observ'd, and the other can only be observ'd to be despis'd.

The statue at *Charing-Cross* has the advantage of being well plac'd; the pedestal is finely elevated, and the horse full of fire and spirit; but the man is ill design'd, and as tamely executed: there is nothing of expression in the face, nor character in the figure, and tho' it may be vulgarly admir'd, it ought to be generally condemn'd.

When I have stood at this place, I have often regretted that some such opening as this had not been contriv'd, to serve as a centre between the two cities of *London* and *Westminster*, and from whence, particularly, the cathedrals of *St. Paul's* and the *Abbey* might have been seen, as the terminations of the two vista's: I am of opinion that nothing in *Europe* would have had a finer effect; but now 'tis impossible it should ever

take place, and I mention it only by way of hint, that private property is, generally speaking, the only bar to publick ornament and beauty.

The new *Admiralty* was erected on a spot of ground, which afforded the *Architect* room for all the beauties his imagination could suggest, and the expence it was rais'd at, enabled him to execute all that beauty in a grand, tho' simple manner; how he has succeeded, the building is a standing evidence; and very much concern'd I am to see a pile of that dignity and importance, like to continue a lasting reproach of our national want of taste.

I must ingenuously confess that the number of pretty little boxes, that are built on the ruins of *Whitehall*, make me no satisfaction for the loss of that palace; not that I believe it ever was a fine structure, but because it might have been so; because no piece of ground, so near two great cities, could afford a finer situation; with so noble a river on one side, and so beautiful a park on the other: and because *Inigo Jones's* plan for rebuilding it is still forthcoming, and may be made use of to erect a structure equal to the situation.

The majestick sample he has given of his art in the *Banqueting-House*, is a continued persuasive to incline us to wish for the rest of that magnificent pile, of which this was intended to be so inconsiderable a part: to be sure if ever this could be effected, *Britain* might boast of a
palace

palace, which might excel even the proud *Versailles*, and be as much visited too, in compliment to its superior taste.

I cannot leave this place without taking some notice of the admirable cieling, perform'd by *Rubens*, which is beyond controversy, one of the finest things of the kind in *Europe*. 'Tis indeed not so generally known as one could wish, but it needs only to be known to be esteemed according to its merit. In short, it is but an ill decoration for a place of religious worship; for in the first place, its contents are no ways a-kin to devotion, and in the next, the workmanship is so very extraordinary, that a man must have abundance of zeal, or no taste, that can attend to any thing beside.

As there is very little probability that this palace will ever be rebuilt, and thrown open to the *Park*, I can't help wishing that the station of the horse-guards, and the adjoining military apartments were pull'd down, and others in a more consistent and regular taste, were erected in their room: I am of opinion that a sketch might be made of a structure, partly in the stile of the antients, and partly like fortification, which would have an admirable effect, and at once be suitable to its use, and serve as a noble decoration of the area before it. But this I submit intirely to the board of works, as persons abundantly more concern'd in such a scheme than I.

44 *A Critical Review of the*

Tho' the old Gothique gate, which stands in the middle of the street, and opposite to *Whitehall*, is without doubt, a sort of incumbrance to the way, yet it has something so venerable in its figure, and has so fine an effect on the landscape from the other side of the *Park*, that I should lament as much to see it pull'd down, as to see a worse erected in its room.

Tho' I did not design to touch any more on the little edifices which are rais'd on the ruins of *Whitehall*, yet as some few remarks may arise from another survey of them, I will take the liberty of mentioning them a second time.

That which has made the most noise, and excited the most curiosity, is Sir *John Vanbrug's*; a fabrick erected in that gentleman's own peculiar taste; that is to say, a medley of the Gothique and Antique: a manner which he was remarkably fond of, and which indeed distinguishes his buildings from almost every other master's in the universe. I am very far from thinking it a proper model for others to follow, or that his authority is sufficient to justify it: to be sure nothing is more corrupt, nor can tend more to the degeneracy of true beauty; and yet sometimes, by the help of a lively fancy, it has a good effect, and would grace a landscape better than any thing in a more regular and finish'd taste. I believe this little box of Sir *John's*, might be distinguish'd as a proof of this assertion; and if it had a proper point of
view

view, would appear to a good deal of advantage.

The next is the Earl of *Pembroke's*, which some months ago, seem'd, at least, to be pretty, and wanted but little of being elegant; but now his lordship has thought proper to alter it in such a manner, that it would be hardly known by either of these epithets: to hide the whole front of a house, for the sake of the offices, is certainly something of a mistake; but these have neither manner, nor so much as materials to render them tolerable.

The Duke of *Montagu's* new house was intended to be plain and simple, but I presume, at the same time, beautiful and harmonious; and yet, with all submission to better judges, it appears to me heavy and insipid; loaded with roof, and incumber'd with irregular offices. I might add too, that the stone projection towards the *Thames*, is an excrescence which has neither taste nor ornament to recommend it: the alcove may answer very gracefully within, for what I can tell; but, without, I am positive 'tis a blemish which hardly any convenience can pardon.

His Grace of *Richmond's* is next, and has greatly the advantage of its neighbour; there is something of manner, as well as simplicity in this; it satisfies the eye, and answers in the prospect: and yet even here the entrance is intolerable; not only because 'tis bad in itself, but because

46 *A Critical Review of the*

cause it hides all the lower part of the house, and of course spoils the proportion, without adding a single beauty to make an atonement.

Before I quit this place, I must take notice of the brasen statue, erected here in honour of *James II.* The attitude is fine, the manner free and easy, the execution finish'd and perfect, and the expression in the face inimitable: it explains the very soul of that unhappy monarch, and is therefore as valuable as if it commemorated the features and form of a hero. In short 'tis pity 'tis not remov'd to some more publick and open place, that it might be better known, and more admir'd.

We'll now step into the *Park*, where we shall see a house in the finest situation, with the whole canal and park in prospect; yet so obscur'd with trees, that except in the garrets, it can't have the advantage of either: surely there can be no excuse for so egregious a mistake, but that the house itself is in so wrong a taste, that it was the owner's interest to hide it.

Hard by, the new *Treasury* is erecting, and if we may judge by the foundation, of stone too: I hope it will be grand and magnificent; it will have a glorious area before it, and will be seen to the utmost perfection from the other side of the park: whence the angles of these houses, the space before them, and the buildings behind them, form one of the beautifullest scenes about town. But however, let it be ever so stately,
and

and august, there will be much reason to regret, that as there are two new buildings on each side of it, they were not contriv'd in the same taste, and in the same line; for by this means they would have serv'd as wings to the centre, and form'd one grand and elegant whole.

About half way along the *Mall*, *Westminster-Abbey* appears over the tops of the trees, in the most picturesque manner imaginable: the fine green of the park itself, the canal, the island, and another city arising beyond all, is a view of such a nature as few places in the world can parallel.

Carlton-House, now belonging to his *Royal Highness*, is most delightfully situated for a place of elegant and courtly pleasure: but the building itself is tame and poor: hardly any place is capable of greater improvements, and hardly any place stands in more need of them.

Marlborough-House is another instance of great expence, but no taste: it consists only of a range of windows or two; a certain quantity of unmeaning stone, which was intended for a decoration, and a weight of chimnies over all, enough to sink the roof to the foundation. 'Tis certain the ground afforded the architect all the opportunity imaginable of exerting his utmost art and genius, and if he had, the very place itself would have secured him the highest applause.

'Tis

48 *A Critical Review of the*

'Tis with no small concern, I am oblig'd to own that the palace of the *British Kings* is so far from having one single beauty to recommend it, that 'tis at once the contempt of foreign nations, and the disgrace of our own: 'twill admit of no debate that the court of a monarch ought to be the centre of all politeness; and a grand and elegant out-side would seem, at least, an indication of a like perfection within: we may safely add, that this is necessary even in a political sense: for strangers very naturally take their impressions of a whole people by what they see at court, and the people themselves are, and ought to be dazzled by the august appearance of majesty, in every thing that has any relation to it. I could wish, therefore, that ways and means could be invented to bring about this necessary point; that *Britain* might assert her own taste and dignity, and vie in elegance, as well as power, with the most finish'd of her neighbours.

Buckingham-House is a building that attracts more eyes, and has more admirers than almost any other about town; not that 'tis in fact the most beautiful, but because it appears so; an advantage which it derives only from its situation, and the liberty it allows the spectator of seeing it in what point of view he pleases. The parts which compose this pile are neither new nor surprising: the proportions are not absolutely perfect, the windows being remarkably too large

large and numerous ; and the decorations seem poor and trivial: the statues on top are wretched, and rather load than adorn the building; the colonnade which leads to the wings, is stuck on to the house without any plea for its connection, and the wings are both miserable in themselves, and no ways a-kin to the house they belong to. Upon the whole, tho', it must be confess'd it has the appearance of taste and design, and if 'tis not perfect, there are few houses that are more so: the late Duke's judgment is certainly to be applauded much, for chusing his ground so well. 'Tis owing to him that the house has at once the advantage of a triple vista along the *Mall*, the air of *Constitution-Hill*, the prospect of *Chelsea Fields*, terminated with the hills of *Surrey*, and a most delightful view of the *Canal*, with the landscape on either side, and the *Banqueting-House* at *Whitehall* to finish and adorn the whole.

Many people may be of opinion that the *Park*, in its present negligent circumstance, is more beautiful than if methodiz'd with art, and decorated in a more grand and elegant manner: I must confess I am of a different sentiment, and should be pleas'd to see it render'd as agreeable as the nature of its situation, and the uses it must answer will give leave: neither is it absolutely necessary that these refinements should, in any remarkable degree, interfere with its

H present

present simplicity, or banish any one advantage it now enjoys.

To begin with the *Green Park*, for example; no-body will controvert, but that the agreeable variety of ground there, is capable of very extraordinary improvements; slopes might be contriv'd, with a very little expence, in a beautiful, and yet an unaffected taste; basons of water might be sunk in various places, which would be no small addition to the landscape; new walks might be laid out, and trees planted in such a manner, as to make the whole appear natural and picturesque together.

In the lower park, near the end of the *Canal*, you have a view of the space between the *Mall* and the water, in which nature herself has marked a large semicircular break, that in some measure calls upon the spectator to plead for improvement: this therefore I could wish to see turn'd into a terrass, in the form it at present appears in, with a large gravel walk to lead from the *Mall* to its centre; the intermediate spaces to remain cover'd with wild grass, as they are now; from this terrass I would have a regular slope continued to the flat below, with a flight of steps just in the middle, both for convenience and decoration: the flat should be covered with turf, with a statue in the midst, and a gravel-path round it. The walk by the side of the *Canal* I would have gravell'd too, that it might at once adorn the scene by day, and afford a beautiful

beautiful evening retreat, in a summer by moonlight, to enjoy the air and water in perfection.

'Tis perhaps unnecessary to mention that I would have the sides of the *Canal* kept in the most perfect repair, both to preserve the ground, and give the line all the advantage 'tis capable of. One would wonder indeed, that in the present management of the *Park* such a trifle as this should be neglected, when it could be done with so little charge, and 'twould answer so well in the effect.

With the regulations here proposed, 'tis easy to imagine how beautiful a prospect the *Park* would afford from hence; especially when 'tis consider'd that the *Banqueting-House* ends the view on one side, the *Admiralty* on the other, and the dome of *St. Paul's* between them both. Even as it shews at present, hardly any prospect appears so grand or beautiful; particularly in a calm, clear day, when the sun is descending, the water smooth, and the whole picture reflected from the surface, even with more graces than the original.

Rosamond's-Pond is another scene, where fancy and judgment might be employ'd to the greatest advantage; there is something wild and romantic round the sides of it, which a genius would make a fine use of if, he had liberty to improve it as he pleas'd: to be sure the banks of it ought to be kept in better repair, and if a *Venus* in the action of rising from the sea, with

52 *A Critical Review of the*

the *Graces* round her, was rais'd in the middle of it, it would neither be an improper or a useless decoration.

The *Vine-Yard*, and that whole side of the *Park* is, to be sure, most scandalously neglected, and if 'tis not capable of such beauty as the other, 'tis the more necessary to keep it decent; and art should be made to bestow what nature has deny'd.

The *Bird-Cage-Walk* is exceeding pleasant; the swell of the ground in the middle has an admirable effect on the vista; and the view from thence down to the *Canal* is perfectly simple and agreeable: to be sure 'tis capable of as much improvement as the opposite side, and that too pretty much in the same taste, tho' I would advise something different for the sake of variety: the circle of trees which grows there might be made the centre of a very beautiful scene, and become one of the most delightful arbours in the world. — I must not omit here, that from the last mentioned walk, *Whitehall* and *St. Paul's* are seen over the tops of the trees, in the island, in a very pretty and picturesque manner.

The island itself is a spot of ground, which may be made one of the most enchanting summer retreats imaginable: as it is, 'tis a place of great beauty, and improv'd with some art; but then it wants to the full as much as it possesses: if one side is like a paradise in miniature, the
other

other is a wilderness, and as the waters in and about it are suffered to stagnate and putrify, they become almost as much a nuisance as an ornament: 'tis beyond question, that if the little channels which wander so variously thro' this place, were directed properly, and kept sweet and pure, even that part of the island which is now a desert, would rival, if not surpass the other; and the side next the *Canal*, with the advantage of that noble vista, would be more beautiful than either: I would recommend too a proper and elegant management of the trees, the keeping the banks in the most finish'd repair, and, in a more particular manner, the erecting a grot, statue, or obelisk at the end of a little canal that shoots up into the centre of the island on the west side.

The *Parade* I have already touch'd upon, and therefore have little more to add on that subject: 'tis certainly a grand and spacious area, and if it should ever be adorn'd with truly noble and august buildings, would not be esteem'd one of the most inconsiderable beauties about town. I can by no means think it a wrong place to erect an equestrian statue in, to the memory of some departed hero: such a decoration can be no where raised with more propriety, and no situation whatever would become it better: 'tis true the great and immortal *Nassau* has been once deny'd this piece of justice, but they were not soldiers who were guilty of so great an indignity; we

54 *A Critical Review of the*

we may presume, therefore, that one time or other, those gentlemen will resolve to pay this compliment to a monarch, they must all esteem, as his mighty genius and superior abilities deserved: a compliment which, tho' due to him, would do honour to themselves, and wipe away a stain which seem'd to reflect a national ingratitude and inelegance on us all.

As we have now done with the *Park*, 'twill be but proper to proceed on to *Westminster*; a city long famous for its antiquity, yet producing very little worthy of attention, and less of admiration. We will begin with the house on the left hand of *King-street*, and near adjoining to *Privy-Garden*: not that it is any way remarkable in itself, but because it has one of the most elegant irregular views before it of any house in town: the street before it forms a very spacious and noble area; the fine Gothique gate, formerly mention'd, breaks the view on one side, and the other is adorn'd with a profile of the *Banqueting-House* at *Whitehall*; between these the street is discover'd winding to *Charing-Cross*, and over the tops of the buildings there, the steeple of *St. Martin's*, softened by the distance, ends the view, and marks the keeping of the whole.

And yet, with all these advantages, the house is a publick nuisance, as well as all those in *King-street*, *Channel-Row*, and the intire space between: nothing in the universe can be more absurd

absurd than so wretched a communication between two such cities as *London* and *Westminster*; a passage which must be frequented by all foreigners; which is visited even by the sovereign himself many times a year; which is the road of all the justiciary business of the nation; which is the only thorough-fare to the seat of the legislature itself, and the rout of our most pompous cavalcades and processions; surely such a place as this ought, at least, to be large and convenient, if not costly and magnificent; tho' in my opinion it ought to be made the centre of our elegance and grandeur: and to do this effectually, all the buildings I have complain'd of ought to be levell'd to the ground, and a space laid open from *Privy-Garden* to *Westminster-Hall*, on one side, and from the west end of the *Abbey* to *Story's-Gate* on the other: this should be surrounded with stone buildings all in a taste, raised on a piazza or colonnade, with suitable decorations: and the middle should be adorned with a group of statues, answerable to the extent of the circuit round it. 'Tis easy to imagine what an effect such an improvement as this would have on the spectator, and how much more agreeable 'twould be to the honour and credit of the nation.

I should farther desire too, to see all the little hovels demolish'd, which now incumber the *Hall* and the *Abbey*, that those buildings might be seen at least, and if they could not be admir'd
for

56 *A Critical Review of the*

for their beauty, they might be reverenc'd for their greatness and antiquity. If *St. Margaret's* were remov'd with the rest, 'twould be yet a farther advantage; for then the fine chapel of *Harry VII.* would come into play, and be attended to as it deserves. I am very far from expecting, or even imagining that any of these alterations will ever come to pass: I mention them only to explode the miserable taste of our ancestors, who neglected, or did not understand these beauties; and that their descendants may grow wiser at their expence, and prevent the like censures from falling upon them.

To compleat this scheme, I am sometimes inclined to wish that the place which is now call'd *Hell*, was levell'd, and that the new *Parliament-House* should be erected there in its room; 'twould certainly have a noble effect on the prospect, and form a most admirable contraste to the antient edifices of each side of it: I have indeed an objection or two to this part of the scheme; first, I apprehend there is not room enough there for such a pile; and, secondly, it would lose the advantage of a prospect from the river, which its present situation might so happily allow it.

At all events, however, I should be glad to see this noble project put into execution: 'tis certain nothing can be more unworthy of so august a body as the parliament of *Great Britain*, than the present place of their assembly: it must

be

be undoubtedly a great surprize to a foreigner, to be forc'd to enquire for the *Parliament-House* even at the doors ; and when he found it, to see it so detach'd in parcels, so incumber'd with wretched apartments, and so contemptible in the whole : I could wish therefore to see this evil remedied ; to see so useful and necessary a scheme take place : and if it falls into the noble hands to execute, we have long been flatter'd to believe it would, there is no room to doubt but the grandeur of this appearance will answer the majestick purposes 'tis to be employ'd in. The *British* taste in architecture, is, to be sure, more obliged to that *Nobleman*, than any other person now living, and if *Inigo Jones* has any advantage, 'tis only in having lived before him.

'Twill be ridiculous and foolish therefore, in me, to give the least hint for the conduct or improvement of any design which he has engag'd in : I shall therefore say no more than this, that I should be glad to have both houses under the same roof, built on the same line, exactly opposite to each other, the seats rang'd theatrically, the throne in the midst of one semi-circle, the speaker's chair in the other ; and that when the King made his speech, ways and means might be found to remove the partitions from between the two houses, and present the whole parliament of *Britain* at one view, assembled in the most grand, solemn, and elegant manner, with

the Sovereign at their head, and all the decorations round them, which could strike the spectator dumb with admiration, at the profusion of majesty, which set off and adorn'd the whole.

After such a scene as this has been presented to the imagination, no other has importance enough to be attended to: I expect therefore that what has been said of *Westminster-Hall* will meet with but a cool reception. That structure is remarkable only for being the largest room in *Europe* which has no column to support it: all that is excellent in it, therefore, is to be found in the contrivance and workmanship of the roof, and no doubt both are truly admirable: but as skill and contrivance are both thrown away, unless they are to be seen in effect, so a room of half the extent of this, supported on beautiful pillars, and grac'd with suitable cornices, according to the Antique, would excite a great deal more applause, and deserve it infinitely better.

I have already touch'd on the slovenly appearance of our courts of justice: sorry I am that *Westminster-Hall* affords me so many opportunities of renewing this complaint: 'tis, in my opinion, almost necessary they should be more pompous and magnificent, in order to inforce the respect which should ever attend on justice: I therefore take the liberty of recommending this thought to the sages of the law, and as I am
convinced

convinced very many of them are men of taste, there is much reason to depend on them for a suitable reformation.

I suppose my readers have already observ'd, that during the course of my essays on this subject, I have not contented myself with bare remarks on the ornaments I find finish'd to my hand; but that I have taken all opportunities, beside, of pointing out ways and means which either may, or might have been made use of to refine upon some, to adjoin others, and make the most of every situation for the beautifying and adorning the whole.

'Tis in this view I often mention things, which by the interfering of property can never take place: and hold myself excus'd, in the presumption that a neglect in one particular, may be made a spur to the improvement of another.

The new church with the four towers, at *Westminster*, is situated in such a manner, with respect to *Old-Palace-Yard*, that it might have been seen from thence, at the end of a noble vista, to the greatest advantage imaginable: the sight of the towers over the tops of the houses, puts every body in mind of this, and 'tis with much regret that we lose such a beauty.

As to the building itself, 'tis in a very particular taste, and has a great mixture of beauty and caprice in it: there are many parts of it which I approve, and many more which I condemn: 'tis to be sure a fatal mistake, to endea-

60 *A Critical Review of the*

your at an excellence, and then err so wide of the mark as to stumble on deformity; all false ornaments become faults instantly, and only serve to make an absurdity more conspicuous. If the *Architect* of this pile had once thought of this rule, I am persuaded he would have been abundantly more chaste in his compositions, and cut his towers, like that of *Babel*, off in the middle.

Henry VIIIth's chapel has an undoubted right to be taken notice of in a very particular manner, as being one of the most expensive remains of the antient *English* taste and magnificence: to be sure there is no looking on it without admiration; but then its beauty consists much more eminently in the workmanship than the contrivance; which is just the reverse of what it ought to be.

The proportion and harmony of a plan is the first grand secret in building; nicety, and point in execution the last: thus it happens that the edifice before us has nothing in its form to surprise or charm; and all the expence of art, which is lavish'd away upon it, only excites pity that the subject deserv'd it no better.

I am very sensible I run no small risque of being censur'd for making so free with so celebrated a pile as this: but as I profess myself clear of all prejudice, and only in pursuit of truth, so I shall take all the liberties which are
of

of a piece with such a character, and resolve to be govern'd by reason and judgment only.

On these principles, therefore, I will boldly affirm, that nothing could be more absurd than erecting this fabrick at the end of the *Abbey*; it now serving only to spoil the symmetry of both, and make a botch instead of adding a beauty: if there were any point of view where both these pieces might be seen together, the truth of my assertion would be apparent, and as it is, a little imagination will answer the same end.

Let us farther add that, by this unnatural conjunction, the whole magnificence of front, which might have been given to this costly chapel, is entirely lost, and those who admire it most implicitly and devoutly, can't help enquiring for an entrance suitable to the rest of the structure.

Let us for once then suppose, that it had been intirely detach'd from the *Abbey*, and erected opposite to the *House of Lords*, with a sumptuous front to the street; let us suppose the new *Parliament-House* finish'd on the other side, and the before-mention'd vista laid open to the new church, and the consequence would then be another group of beauties in building and decoration, which few cities in *Europe* could parallel.

By the many things I have said of the advantage of space before a building, in order to add magnificence to the view, no body will wonder, I presume, that I am for levelling the *Gate-house*, demolishing a large part of *Dean-Yard*,
and

and laying open the street at the west end of the *Abbey*, at least, to an equal breadth with the building. I must frankly own nothing appears so miserable to me, as such incumbrances round a grand or elegant building: they abate the pleasure of the prospect most exceedingly, and are real disadvantages to the builder's fame.

Westminster-Abbey is a fabrick of great antiquity, and challenges some kind of veneration on that account: it is besides of prodigious bulk, and fills the eye, at least, if it does not satisfy it: to glance at it in the landscape, without examining its parts, it pleases tolerably well; to examine its parts, we are under a necessity of disliking the whole: if the height surprizes, we are out of humour with its form; and the fronts in particular ought to have rose eminently above the rest, in order to have varied the lines, and given that grace it so visibly wants. We now rather think of a barn than a church; I believe this image is owing intirely to the extream sharpness of the roof, and if that was rectified, 'twould be greatly to the advantage of the building in general. It must be own'd indeed, that the west end was never finish'd, and there is much reason to believe that the two towers, on each side of it, were designed to give the elevation, 'tis now so apparently defective in.

There is indeed a rumour about the town, that the Dean and Chapter still design to perfect this

this scheme, and raise the towers according to their first projection: but I think 'tis rather too late to begin, for unless they would new-case the church all over, the mixture of the new and old would have a worse effect, than the defect we complain of, and make a sort of patch-work in building, which is ever offensive both to judgment and taste.

As to the inside of the church, 'tis certainly more perfect and judicious than the out: the perspective is strong and beautiful, and strikes the spectator in a very forcible manner, as soon as he makes his entrance; and yet it owes the greatest part of its effect to a fault in symmetry. 'Tis the exceeding height of the grand isle which gives the astonishment; but if that was only in exact proportion to the rest of the parts, it would not be distinguish'd so much, and yet would deserve much greater praise.

The late-erected organ has even interfer'd with this beauty, and broke the vista in the most injudicious manner imaginable: the iron grate below, 'tis true, makes some amends, by presenting us with a little view of perspective, which would make one of the best pictures in that stile I ever saw; and the lights and shadows fall so artfully, that the painter has nothing else to do but copy; 'twill hardly be in his power to improve.

As I have made *Statues* as well as *Architecture*, the subject of this essay, as often as they have
fallen

64 *A Critical Review of the*

fallen in my way; and we are now in the *Abbey*, 'twill be unpardonable not to take a survey of the most remarkable monuments there, and applaud and censure in turn, as occasion offers.

I shall begin with Sir *Godfrey Kneller's*, situated at the lower end of the north isle; a thing designed by Sir *Godfrey* himself, and executed by *Rysbrack*, and yet so far from answering the idea we might conceive of it from two such great names, that it hardly excites common attention or curiosity, unless to read the epitaph, which is exactly of a piece with the tomb, and as unworthy of Mr. *Pope's* genius, as the design of that is of *Kneller's* pencil. One would have thought so accomplish'd a master should have recollected at first sight, that a canopy is far from being a proper decoration in stone, and if it was, that 'tis so stale and trite an ornament, that the worst of his disciples would have rejected it with contempt. One might reasonably add, that Sir *Godfrey* had it in his power to distinguish his own excellencies in the propriety of his ornaments; but those he has chosen may do as well for any body else, and belong no more to a *Painter*, than a *Lord Chief Justice*.

I shall pass by a number of rude Gothique pieces, which instead of adorning really incumber the church, and be particular on such only, which either really excel, or were intended to do so by their founders.

Among

Among the first of these, we may very justly take notice of that erected to the memory of young Mr. *Carteret*: the thought it turns on is fine and poetical; no guardian is so proper of a thing sacred to memory as *Time*, and no bribe so effectual to secure him in its favour as merit: the epitaph he is made to display is in a fine taste, and does honour to him who compos'd it, and him it alludes to: the bust of the young gentleman himself is beautifully simple, and preserves a fine keeping with respect to the whole.

On the other side of the same isle, on the back of the choir, we see another, in all respects opposite to this: I forget the Lady's name in whose honour 'twas erected, and if those who were at the expence of it could be forgot too, 'twould be some advantage to their characters: the conceit of this monument is a front figure of a lady springing upwards from the ground, with a cherubim above her descending to give her a lift; tho' by her attitude, 'tis impossible she should know any thing of the matter. Below her, hovering over the base, is another as lame and wretched as the first, who unfolds as bad an epitaph, and compleats so miserable a piece, that nothing but its next neighbour could keep it in countenance.

That belongs to the late Lord *Kingsale*, and is as fine as painting, carving and gilding can make it: but for its taste, surely 'tis impossible

that any thing should be more remarkable: that nobleman is in a recumbent posture, with a curious suit of armour on, a delicate head of hair, and points to a very emphatical coronet near him, as the sum of all his glory; a very pretty bit of canopy dangles over him, a coat of arms most pompously emblazon'd glitters above that: two poor little boys, whom I pity prodigiously, bear up a most ponderous urn, with the additional weight of the statue into the bargain, and an important epitaph underneath all tells you, that it has been a privilege of the *Kingsale Family* to wear their hats before the King, time out of mind.

Doctor *Chamberlain's* monument is by many people thought one of the best pieces in the *Abbey*, and I own I am inclin'd to be of the same opinion: to be sure every one of the figures is finely executed, and some parts of the Doctor's, in particular, deserve sincere applause: I have no material fault to find with the order and disposition of the whole, and the epitaph, to be sure, says a great many fine things of the Doctor: yet still there wants a boldness and spirit thro' the whole; you can't blame 'tis true, but then you can't heartily praise: in every design where there are more figures than one, 'tis possible to strike the spectator's imagination, as well as appeal to his judgment; and I must be so free as to own, that this piece has not that effect on me.

As

As there is a bust of a late musician in our way, drest up in a beau peruke, and a fine lac'd cravat, he would take it ill if we did not pay our compliment to him as we pass'd by: for which reason I make him this acknowledgment; but for fear the heirs of another musician should lavish away more money to a like purpose, I think myself obliged to declare that *Purcel's* epitaph is, at least, of ten times more value, than *Blow's* monument.

The two boys on each side of the little tomb, erected to the memory of Sir *Gilbert Lort*, are in a very pretty taste, and a perfect contraste to each other; one representing passionate, exclamatory grief, and the other still and silent: 'tis pity they are divided by so bad an ornament in the middle: had they lean'd on a single urn, which, in the antique taste, might have been supposed to hold his ashes, they would have had a fine effect, and challenged more admiration than many a more pompous and expensive pile.

Looking thro' into one of the little chapels, which are separated from the body of the church, we see a monument that belongs to one of the *Veres*, and challenges some attention: 'tis true the principal figure is in the old Gothique taste, flat on his back, and of consequence not to be relish'd, tho' executed in the most perfect manner in the world: but then the four Knights which support the stone over him, with his armour on top, are justly to be admir'd; and

68 *A Critical Review of the*

tho' both their dress and the oddness of their employ, are disadvantages, they strike you with pleasure notwithstanding, and each independent figure demands your approbation. Sorry I am to see them us'd so ill; most of them are maim'd, and one of them in particular has lately had a leg broke off; I would therefore recommend the care of the *Dead* to the Dean and Chapter, as well as the *Living*; and as they are least able to take care of themselves, I think they have a better claim to the protection of others; and especially as they pay for their lodging too.

Just opposite to this door, against the wall, is a martial figure, representing one of the *Holleses*, and till that of Mr. Craggs's was put up, was the only erect one in the *Abbey*: an attitude I am far from discommending, for 'tis my opinion, statues should always represent life and action, and not languor and insensibility: 'tis particularly happy when adapted to soldiers and heroes, who ought never to be suppos'd at rest, and should have their characters represented as strong as possible: this before us is bold and manly, tho' not chaste and elegant: 'tis finely elevated too, and the mourning *Pallas*es at the base of it are both well fancied and well applied. There is no part of the execution of this tomb that we can admire, but as there was a propriety in the design, I could not pass it over without giving it its due praise.

The

The next thing in the *Abbey*, which according to method and order demands our attention, is the tomb erected to the memory of the late Duke of *Newcastle*, by the Countess of *Oxford*, his daughter: to be sure there is not any mausoleum belonging to the whole church, except *Henry VIIth's*, which is built at so great an expence as this: the materials are exceeding fine, the space it fills grand and noble, the architecture rich and ornamental; and yet it gives no pleasure to the elegant and knowing, and is only the admiration of the vulgar: the reason of which is plain; magnificence has been consulted only, and not beauty; and cost and splendour are lavish'd away, if not directed by judgment and taste: the figure of the Duke himself is full of absurdities: it neither sits nor lies, is employed in no action, has no expression, no dignity, and abounds with manifest, open disproportions; the two statues on each side are equally tame and unmeaning, and have no more relation to the principal, than if they were still in the statuary's yard: I am as much displeased with the two brace of angels that incumber the upper part of this pile, and indeed if that whole story were entirely remov'd, I am of opinion it would be no disadvantage to the remainder.

The monument erected in honour of the late *Sir Isaac Newton*, has pretty much divided the publick opinion; some extolling it as one of the most perfect pieces both in design and execu-

execution, and others again depreciating it, as no way remarkable for either: I chuse rather to steer between these two extreams, as nearest to truth, and agreeable to the best of my understanding; I therefore make no scruple to own that the statue of Sir *Isaac* has something in it exceedingly venerable, bold, and majestick; it commands attention, and expresses importance; but then the action it is employ'd in is vain, and of course out of the character it represents: Sir *Isaac*, tho' one of the greatest men who ever did honour to humanity, was at the same time the least proud and assuming; and deliver'd some of the finest principles of philosophy as doubtful, which all his readers thought demonstrated: 'twas wrong therefore to give him that vanity after his death, which never belonged to him in his life: if the two boys at his feet, which display the scrole, had done it only to the spectator, and Sir *Isaac* had not been concern'd in it, it would have answered every way; and engaging the philosopher in profound contemplation in the mean while, had expressed his knowledge as well, and his character better.

The bas-reliefs on the urn are most excellent, and do great honour to *Rysbrack*; the principal figure in particular, that weighs the sun, and all our planetary system by the steel-yard, is admirable, and the device is beautiful and fully expressing Sir *Isaac*'s doctrine of *Gravitation*, which is the basis of his fame: the boys that
are

are introduc'd to tell you he was mint-master, is trifling and poor, unworthy of the rest, and no compliment to him: neither is the conceit of the *aloe-plant*, in the other corner of the tabature less faulty; because it is to the full as insignificant, and abundantly more obscure.

The globe in the back of the monument, is almost a general objection, as projecting too forward on the sight, and spoiling the keeping of the whole. I fancy another pedestal, well proportioned, had been esteem'd a more natural support for the figure of *Astronomy* above, and would have had room in the middle of it to introduce the globe to more advantage: but this I leave to the determination of better judges.

The upper part of the figure of *Astronomy* is, without controversy, one of the most delicate things that can be imagin'd; the manner and action are both faultless, and the expression of the face is at once thoughtful and compos'd, sweet and majestick; I wish the rest of it had been answerable, but it is quite the contrary in all respects; the legs are clumsy and incumber'd with drapery, and so far from being beautifully or naturally disposed, that they are piled one upon another, and put me in pain for fear the figure should roll off the globe, for want of a due poise to keep it fast.

Upon the whole, tho', it is, at least, one of the most pardonable monuments I have seen, and I am positive the next age will be alike pleased

pleased to see such another genius as *Newton*, and such another master as *Ryßbrack* to do honour to his memory.

But if this monument of Sir *Isaac*'s must undergo such a severe trial, and be so hardly acquitted, what will be the fate of its neighbour, since rais'd to commemorate the late Lord *Stanhope*? Undoubtedly it will meet with no advocate, and has not even the smallest title to favour. 'Tis all alike, huge and heavy; expensively Gothique, and magnificently clumsy; the design is so trifling and absurd, that not even the hand of *Ryßbrack* can give you the least prejudice to its advantage: the statue of his Lordship might very easily be mistaken for that of *Ajax*, if time and place could afford the least help to imagination. It has the same unmeaning air and features which that heroe is described with, is as enormous in bulk, and seems as void of design and penetration; circumstances that no way agree with the character of Lord *Stanhope*, and which rather lampoon than do him honour.

The tent behind is most miserably conceiv'd, and worst adapted of any thing I ever saw in my life; and the *Pallas* upon the top of it has the most uneasy station imaginable: she is a giantess too, and seems to have as little forecast as her charge below: in short, if either of them have any beauty, 'tis in being of a piece with each other;

ther; but even that is an excellency which I fancy no body will ever envy or applaud.

We must now strike down to the end of the south isle; and there we shall be somewhat better entertain'd: the monument of Mr. *Craggs*, is in a very simple and elegant taste: there appears much judgment in setting his statue upright, because it fills the vista, with great harmony, and looks advantageously even at the greatest distance; the attitude of it is delicate and fine; the thought of resting it on an urn, pathetic and judicious, and if the face and head had been more finish'd, the whole had been without blemish: the architecture is alike plain, and the embellishments few, and well chosen. In a word, many tombs have more beauties, none fewer faults.

I must now take notice of two monuments together, tho' of very different persons, and somewhat remov'd in situation from one another; they are the Lord *Godolphin's*, and Mr. *Congreve's*; my reason for mentioning them at one time is because they were erected at the charge of the same person; because they are in the same bad taste, and the epitaphs of them both are wrote in the same stile, and spelt with the same exactness: the Lady who was at the expence of putting them up, had undoubtedly the credit of paying a compliment to men of the highest merit, in their different stations; yet 'tis to be wish'd that she had thought it worth her

L

while,

while, for her own sake, to have done it with more decorum, and in a manner more suitable to her quality, and their deserts.

The plainness and simplicity of Dr. *Friend's* bust pleases me much; and if his epitaph had been in the same goût, it would have been, at least, as high a compliment both to the *Scholar* and *Physician*.

There is something pretty in Mrs. *Desbovery's* tomb; the figures are lively and free, and the architecture not much amiss; but her own amiable character, indeed, is the highest decoration, and to which we may justly add that of her friend's, who had the gratitude to pay this gentle compliment to the remembrance of their former affection.

Not far from this is a monument inscrib'd with the name of Mr. *Smyth*, which is much in taste; a fine bust, in relievo, of that gentleman, is supported by a weeping figure, representing his daughter, both which are designed and executed with great judgment and spirit. If any thing is wanting, 'tis a rest for the Lady's left arm, which being held up to the head, appears painful for want of it: the urn on which she sits, with its base and pyramid behind, finish the whole tomb, and unite in a stile most harmonious and agreeable.

The monument of Mr. *Tbynn* falls next under our consideration; one of the most celebrated things in the *Abbey*: 'tis indeed in a
most

most elegant taste, and the execution is equal to the design; the languid dying posture he is plac'd in, with the action of his hand, directing the spectator to the tragick story of his death, which was once engrav'd behind him, are beautifully consistent with each other, and must have had a very pathetic influence on all who beheld it; particularly, as so strongly inforc'd with the fine relief, which represented the murder below: but since the caprice of some, or the prejudice and interests of others, have eraz'd the inscription, neither his action, nor that of the inimitable boy at his feet, can be thoroughly understood, unless consider'd in the light it was first intended to appear in, as describ'd above.

The execrable Gothique heap, which was erected at so great an expence, in honour of so brave a man as Sir *Cloudefly Shovel*, and even by his Sovereign herself, has been so emphatically and justly expos'd in the *Spectator* already, that I have no need to say any thing more on that subject; I shall only beg leave to put the two neighbouring tombs of Admiral *Cburchill* and Mr. *Stepney* in the same rank of censure, since they are almost as costly, and full as unmeaning and ridiculous.

I must now pass over several wretched things that are unworthy of observation, in order to hasten to the corner of the poets; but by the way, cannot overlook the droll figure, lately set up, at the charge of a noble Peer, to the

76 *A Critical Review of the*

memory of *Grabe* the commentator: he is elevated on a high sort of a funeral chest, with a lamp by his side, and a pen in his hand to represent, I suppose, his unwearied application to study in his life-time; but then the ridiculous height of the statue, the clumsiness of the attitude, and the oddness of the employ, never fail to excite laughter in all who behold them: in short, he looks like a boy on a high joint-stool, kicking his heels about, and afraid of tumbling every moment.

I don't know any circumstance which distinguishes the real *patron* so much, as paying the last compliment of an urn and inscription to the ashes of a dead genius: it argues a thorough and disinterested esteem for merit, sets the fairest example of magnanimity for the great to follow, and excites the noblest emulation among the learned to deserve a like honour.

In this view, I am charm'd with the recollection that the venerable names of *Spencer*, *Johnson*, *Cowley*, and *Dryden*, have been perpetuated with just and noble distinctions, by such illustrious personages as *Sheffield*, and *Villiers*, Dukes of *Buckingham*, the present Earl of *Oxford*, and *Devereux* Earl of *Essex*: some distinction, 'tis true, is necessary to be made in the share of applause which is due to these noble-men, for the same humane and generous action: the Earls of *Essex* and *Oxford* did this honour to *Johnson* and *Spencer*, without complimenting them-

themselves at the same time, by inscribing their own names on the stone; a delicate piece of self denial which *Villiers* and *Sheffield* had not firmness enough to practise, in their generosities to *Dryden* and *Cowley*.

The present Dutchess of *Buckingham* will, however, have an equitable claim to share in glory with the first: for she justly disliking the bust, which was first set up for Mr. *Dryden*, ordered it, at her own expence, to be remov'd, and another plac'd in its stead. At once unwilling that her dead Lord's humanity should be censur'd for want of taste; and dissatisfy'd with the glory of such an action, unless the thing itself agreed exactly with the intent of raising it.—The present bust is far from being contemptible, and the whole tomb simple, if not magnificent.

I am always much surpriz'd to see so wretched a thing as that erected to the memory of Mr. *Phillips*, inscrib'd with the name of *Harcourt*: one would have naturally imagin'd that whoever aim'd at publick ornament, would endeavour at something like elegance too; one would have expected it in a more eminent degree, from such a name as this: but on the contrary, nothing is more opposite, nothing can be more contemptible: it is even a burlesque upon monuments, and instead of doing honour to the founder, or the person 'tis consecrated to, indicates very strongly, that either one had not merit enough

nough to deserve a better, or the other had not spirit and taste enough to do it justice.

The bust of *Johnson* is executed with great happiness, and looks with abundance of life and spirit: the tablature 'tis inclos'd in is beautiful, and the decorations few, proper, and elegant. To talk like a critick, there is nothing wanting but a note of admiration, at the end of the inscription: *O rare Ben Johnson!*

Tho' the tomb of *Spencer* has suffered greatly by time, and was erected in an age when taste was in its infancy in *England*, yet there is something in it venerably plain, and not absurdly ornamental. The materials were certainly very rich, and I don't recollect any of the same standing that deserve so little censure.

I am pleased to see the great *Butler* here on any terms, but 'twould have given me much greater satisfaction to see it rais'd in a more magnificent manner, and by such persons too as might have reflected greater honour to his memory; tho' his own merits were so eminent as to need no publick acknowledgement to make them immortal.

The busts of *Shadwell* and *St. Evremond* are neither of them very extraordinary, and therefore I shall content myself with this bare mention, that they are there.

Mr. *Prior's* monument I cannot so easily pass over, because 'tis meant to be magnificent, and was design'd to call upon the attention of mankind.

kind: Undoubtedly few men had ever better title to a sepulchral trophy than this author; but still I should have been more pleas'd if it had been erected at any other person's charge, rather than his own: 'tis extending our vanity beyond the grave, and making the envy of mankind eternal. As to the tomb itself, I must be free enough to confess I am not intirely satisfied with it: his own bust, which is design'd to be the principal figure, is hurt by the whole statues on either side; and 'tis not to be question'd but a simple urn, with the head on a pedestal over it, would have had a finer effect, and better deserved our admiration. The head itself is certainly perform'd with great mastery, and is justly esteem'd one of the best things in *England*; and yet if a little *French* embroidery on the cap, and drapery, were spared, I believe it would be far from a disadvantage to it, because it would be then more a-kin to the chastity and purity of the Antique.

I believe every body that visits the repository of the illustrious dead, cannot help looking round, like me, for the divine *Milton*, and immortal *Shakespear*; names which are the honour of their country, and yet have received no honour from it; names which every foreigner must enquire for, and miss with regret and uneasiness to himself, and censure and disesteem to us: that *Milton*, indeed, has been deny'd this privilege, I don't so much wonder, because he
 oppos'd

oppos'd the priesthood; an injury which they can neither forget nor forgive: an injury that the merit of half mankind united in one person can never atone for, and which the fraternity will resent as long as the name of the aggressor survives their malice and persecution.

But this was not *Shakespeare's* case; a man whose works have been the bread of thousands, and the entertainment of whole nations for above an age together; who was almost the creator of the *English* stage, and the support of it ever since; and yet, notwithstanding all his own merits, and the continued benefits he has been the instrument of procuring others, not one honorary stone has distinguished him among the sons of the *Muses*, nor one grateful line acknowledged the influence of his superior genius: a neglect so shameful that it reflects in the severest manner, both on those who have grown rich by his labours, and those who have been entertain'd so frequently with their representations.

Before we go into the inclos'd part of the *Abbey*, 'twill be proper to stop a moment at the tombs on the left hand of the entrance: that of Doctor *Busby's* is certainly in a good taste, and well executed; the figure is bold and free; in a proper action, and very expressive of the character it represents; neither are the decorations much inferior. But that of Dr. *South's* is altogether as bad; 'tis only a parcel of good marble spoil'd, and the statue even more shocking
than

than the original block it was first composed of.

Of each side of the collateral isles of the choir, are three distinct spaces, which, if I mistake not, were formerly us'd as chapels, and consecrated to particular saints, but now are only repositories of the dead, and devoted to their monuments and inscriptions. I shall touch upon what is remarkable in each of them quite round, and reserve that of *Henry VII.* to close my remarks on this part of my subject.

In the first of these, on the right hand, you have a sample of the antient Gothique magnificence, which was the highest taste our ancestors arriv'd at: that is to say, a monument which spreads over a vast extent of space, contains a prodigious quantity of the finest marble, is adorn'd with a vast variety of decorations, dazzles your eyes with a profusion of gildings, is animated with abundance of inscriptions, and yet, upon the whole, appears an insignificant heap, without form or order, beauty or understanding, creating pity that so much money, time, and labour should be thrown away, instead of exciting applause and admiration.

What has been said of this particular tomb will suit as well with all the rest in the same stile; for tho' they differ in particulars, they are the same upon the whole, and a superiority in hugeness or expence, only calls upon the spectator for a severer censure, and more poignant

82 *A Critical Review of the*

ant dissatisfaction. One absurdity especially, which is common to them all, ought to be most rigorously condemn'd, which is, the graving their inscriptions in so small a character, and placing them at such a distance from the eye, that they were ever as ineffectual, as if time had effac'd them from the first moment of their insertion.

In the last of the chapels on the right hand, is a single statue in honour of one of the *Holleses*; which expresses more juvenile sweetness and beauty than any thing I ever saw of the kind in my life: if this figure has any fault in character and design, 'tis in its being in a languid, sedentary posture, tho' clad in armour, and describ'd as a hero in his bloom: to be sure, an attitude of more spirit would have been more suitable to the person represented, would have given the statuary greater latitude to exert his genius, and occasion'd more satisfaction in the spectator too.

Opposite to the door of this chapel, is a brazen bust of Sir *Robert Stapleton*, an author of some repute in the time of King *Charles I.* which has something in it very lively and pleasing; and tho' a judicious eye will easily find it incorrect, he will not fail of giving it some degree of praise notwithstanding.

Much in the same situation, in the other isle, is a bas-relief, in honour of one of the *La Tours*, a family from *France*, which has a degree of delicacy, both in the tale and expression, which

is very entertaining: 'tis a mother lamenting over her dead, or dying daughter, and the artist has been very happy in the execution: I could wish tho' that the drapery had not been quite so prodigally bestow'd, and that the folds had been fewer, and more simple.

On the other side of the same isle, a little lower down, is another piece of the same nature with this, which is the reason I arrange them together: the story of that, is a Lady dying, and her husband, and several children weeping round her: I can't say that the scene is not well enough dispos'd, and the passions naturally and properly express'd; but still I think such little tablatures as these, are fitter for a medal than a monument; and ought to be kept in a box, rather than be expos'd to the open air: what is calculated to last for any term of years, ought to be compos'd of large and nervous parts, that time might be the longer in hurting it, and that it might have a better chance of challenging the attention of posterity.

I must now go back again to the first chapel on the right hand, coming down the isle, where we shall see, at the entrance, a figure leaning on a mattress, which is admirably well executed, but in the worst stile almost of any thing in the *Abbey*: in a word, 'tis an exact copy of the dress, and character of the times, at the beginning of the reign of King *Charles I.* The spruce hair, curl'd whiskers, pointed beard,

84 *A Critical Review of the*

starch'd ruff, formal cloak, and large buttons, are as carefully preserv'd, as if they were a fit standard of beauty for all future ages.

Above this, and almost out of sight, is a brazen bust of a Lady, which deserves some admiration, both as it expresses great simplicity and beauty, and as 'tis finely executed too: 'tis true the dress and manner of this are as much to be objected to as the last, and have the same excuse of mode to plead in their justification.

Just opposite to the entrance, is a statue that is disposed with the most ease and freedom of any thing I ever saw, and indeed has no other beauty to recommend it. I don't recollect any thing else remarkable in either of these chapels to take farther notice of; for tho' they are crowded with monuments, they are all so execrably ill, as to be even beneath censure: one modern Lady, indeed, in the next chapel to this, would take it ill if I did not pay something like a compliment to her: for she is drest with such nicety, so lac'd, so ruffled, and so fervent in her devotions too at the same time, as if we were to believe there was as much ceremony to be observed in gaining admission into heaven, as at court, on a birth-day.

Some of my readers would perhaps take it ill, if in this place, and writing on the curiosities of the *Abbey*, I should not say something in honour of the fine wax-work figures which are plac'd so curiously up and down this venerable

ble

ble building; particularly the King *William* and Queen *Mary*, which have been lately so amicably shut up together in the same box. To oblige them therefore, and in compliment to the Reverend Dean and Chapter, who permit these noble decorations, I will throw away a moment or two in giving my opinion of them. In the first place, therefore, with all submission to better judgments, I think they are ridiculous and unnatural in themselves, expressing neither figure like statuary, nor colour like painting: secondly, I am humbly of opinion that they would become a puppet-show better than a church, as making a mere farce of what should be great and solemn: and, thirdly, I think them highly injurious to the characters they represent, as shewing them like jointed babies, to the stupid admiration of the vulgar, and the contempt of men of sense; instead of characterizing their persons, and perpetuating their virtues.

For all which, and many more reasons, I beg leave to move that the whole present set of waxen worthies may be demolish'd without benefit of clergy, and that all their present patrons and abettors may be substituted in their place; and that, as fast as any future Reverence should endeavour to seduce his brethren to the like idolatry, he should be immediately chronicled in wax, and shewn with a cap and bells, to distinguish the extent of his understanding, and the perfection of his taste.

The

86 *A Critical Review of the*

The inclosure, behind the altar, commonly known by the name of *St. Edward's chapel*, has nothing remarkable in it but certain Gothic antiquities, which are made sacred by tradition only, and serve to excite a stupid admiration in the vulgar.

There is indeed, at the end of this place, a sort of gate to the tomb of *Henry V.* which was intended for a piece of magnificence, and no cost was spared to make it answer that design; but the taste of it is so unhappy, and the execution so wretched, that it has not the least claim to that character. The tomb of that Prince challenges attention only because 'twas his, and because the statue on it has lost its head: to account for which singular injury, we are told a ridiculous tale of its being silver, and that the value of it occasioned the sacrilege.

One thing, 'tis true, we meet with in this place, which merits a peculiar regard; that is, a wooden chest of bones, said to be the remains of *Catharine*, daughter of the King of *France*, and consort of *Henry V.* If this account is authentick, I think nothing can be a greater violation of decency, or more injurious to the memory of such illustrious personages, than to expose their reliques in so licentious a manner, and make a shew of what once commanded respect and adoration. If the clergy are advocates for the decency of burial, as no doubt they are, because of the profits which attend it, why
don't

don't those, who have this church under their care, comply but with their common tenets, and grant this indulgence to the ruins of majesty? To be sure I can have no other answer but this, that they bury some for gain, and some they leave unburied for the same reason.

'Tis beyond controversy, that there is something extremely shocking in this violence to the secrets of mortality: the *Antients* had even a superstitious regard for the dust of their ancestors, and surely we are under some obligation to treat ours with good manners: and how the reverend Dean and Chapter can reconcile this principle with their conduct, I leave to the most learned casuist, among them, to determine. If they would hearken to my humble advice, they would not be so very intent on worldly interest, as to neglect worldly reputation: reputation is interest too, and such trespasses as these, in the eyes of men of delicacy and understanding, are not easily forgiven or forgot.

The arch, at the entrance of *Henry VIIIth's* chapel, is exceeding grand and ornamental: the steps underneath are a fine preparation for the scene at landing, and the three doors an admirable expedient to favour the perspective within: but this, and several other beauties, are utterly spoil'd by the stalls, which cut off the collateral isles of the chapel intirely, and thereby spoil the beauty and symmetry of the whole.

The

88 *A Critical Review of the*

The roof of this structure is certainly one of the finest things in the world, I mean in the Gothique stile: nothing can be in a better form, or more richly decorated: perhaps had it been more simple it had shewn to greater advantage; but still tis a wonder that one continued cluster of ornament could be contriv'd to please so much, and answer so well.

Were the absurd partitions mentioned above thrown down, the roof would appear still more surprizing, and the area before more spacious and proportionable: all those tombs which are now shut up in such a manner, that they are now where to be seen as they ought, would then come forward to the eye, and give an additional grandeur and solemnity to the scene: the perspective would be finely broke, and every object properly terminate in the founder's mausoleum, as the principal point of the whole view.

There are few tombs in *Europe* more famous than that of *Henry VII.* neither indeed are there many which deserve to be more so. The undertaking, in itself, was vast and surprizing, the cost prodigious, and the execution exceedingly difficult and laborious. And yet the artist has succeeded in it to admiration; there is hardly a part in it that is not excellent, from the chief figures to the minutest point of the decoration: the statues of the King and Queen are grand and noble, and the bas-relief on the sides below, beautiful and expressive. I am of opinion the
workman,

workman, whoever he was, was equal to the noblest scheme of this nature, and would have made a figure even amongst the *Antients*. What a pity is it therefore that such a genius, and so much art should be lavish'd away on a thing entirely out of taste, and which, at the same expence and study, might have been made the wonder of the world! To explain myself farther on this head, nothing can be more stupid than the laying statues on their backs, in such a situation, that 'tis impossible they should ever be seen to advantage, and of course, that all their perfections must be utterly thrown away. In the next place, the brazen inclosure, which surrounds this tomb, wonderful as it may be, consider'd by itself, is a monstrous blemish, with regard to the thing it was intended to preserve and adorn; because it rises abundantly too high, and intercepts the view intirely from the principal objects.

Without doubt, the statues of the King and Queen, ought to have been in living attitudes, erect, and bold, and the decorating figures should have form'd a corresponding groupe, which in every light, should have stood the test of criticism, and given the spectator an intire satisfaction: a few more steps too should have been added to raise the foundation higher; a magnificent arch might have been thrown over all, and the boundary below should have been only a guide, not an incumbrance to the prospect.

N

Yet,

Yet, erroneous as the taste of this fine monument may be, it may be call'd excellent to that which prevail'd several years after in the reign of King *James I.* as may be seen by the wretched things, which were erected at his command, to the memory of Queen *Elizabeth*, and his mother, *Mary Queen of Scotland*: in these all the blunders, that can be imagin'd, are collected together: want of attitude and expression, harmony and proportion, beauty and decoration: nay, the very columns, which support the superstructure, are of different sorts of marble, and, to make the figures splendid and natural, they are painted and dress'd out to the life, as if they were just retir'd from a drawing-room, and laid down there for a little repose.

But these whims seem to be again out of repute in the reign of his son, as appears by the monuments of the Dukes of *Richmond* and *Buckingham*: in these there are several fine figures in brass, and something like meaning and design; tho' even then they had not learned to distinguish the principal characters, and place them in such attitudes, as should command the spectator's first and last attention and regard.

Both these faults are intirely avoided by *Ryfsbrack*, in the monument erected in the honour of the late Duke of *Buckingham*: there the Duke himself is the principal figure in the groupe, and tho' he is in a cumbent posture, and his Lady, in the most beautiful manner, sitting at his feet,
yet

yet her figure is characteris'd in such a manner as only to be a guide to his, and both reflect back a beauty on each other. The decorations are exceedingly picturesque and elegant: the trophy at his head, the figure of *Time* above, with the medals of his children, fill up all the spaces with so great propriety, that as very little could be added, nothing can be spared. In a word, I have yet seen no ornament that has pleased me better, and very few so well.

I will conclude my remarks on the *Abbey*, with some brief reflections on the use of sepulchral monuments in general, which will, at once, serve to illustrate what has been said on the tombs already erected, and likewise be of some service to the statuary in designing those which may succeed hereafter.

However amiable fame may appear to the living, 'tis certainly no advantage to the dead: whatever dangers they have dared, whatever toils they have undergone, whatever difficulties they have surmounted, the grave is deaf to the voice of applause, and the dust of the noble and vulgar sleep in the same obscurity together. 'Tis possible the conscious spirit may have an idea of the honours that are paid to his ashes; but 'tis much more probable, that the prospect of this imaginary glory, while he liv'd among us, was all the pleasure it ever could afford him. I make this observation, because most monuments are said to be erected as an honour to

the dead, and the living are suppos'd to be the least concern'd in them : whereas on the contrary, there are few but what were rather founded in compliment to the builder's vanity, than in respect to the name they are inscribed with. One man's fame is made the foundation of another's, in the same manner with the gentleman's, who order'd *this sentence* to be made his *epitaph* ; *Here lies Sir Philip Sidney's friend*. Some there are that mention only the names of the persons whose dust they cover, and preserve a noble silence with regard to the hand who rais'd them ; but even here, the dead can receive no benefit from such disinterested affection ; but the living may profit much by so noble an example. Another thing that displeases me, is the manner of the inscriptions, which frequently mistake the very design of engraving them, and as frequently give the lye to themselves. To pore one's self blind in guessing out *Æternæ memoriæ sacrum* is a jest, that would make *Heraclitus* laugh ; and yet most of them begin in that pompous taste, without the least reflection that brass and marble can't preserve themselves from the tooth of time ; and if men's actions have not guarded their reputations, the proudest monument would flatter in vain.

I don't say these things because I am an enemy to the custom : so far from it, no one can admire it more ; but what I intend is, to place every thing on its right principle, and recommend

mend the properest means for the consequence. 'Tis certain there is not a nobler amusement in the world, than a walk in *Westminster Abbey*, among the tombs of heroes, patriots, poets, and philosophers; you are surrounded with the shades of your great forefathers; you feel the influence of their venerable society, and grow fond of fame and virtue in the contemplation: 'tis the finest school of morality, and the most beautiful flatterer of the imagination in nature. I appeal to every man's mind that has any taste for what is sublime and noble, for a witness to the pleasure he experiences on this occasion; and I dare believe he will acknowledge, that there is no entertainment so various, or so instructive. For my own part, I have spent many an hour of pleasing melancholy in its venerable walks; and have been more delighted with the solemn conversation of the dead, than the most sprightly sallies of the living. I have examin'd the characters that were inscribed before me, and distinguished every particular virtue. The monuments of real fame, I have view'd with real respect; but the piles that wanted a character to excuse them, I consider'd as the monuments of folly. I have wandered with pleasure into the most gloomy recesses of this last resort of grandeur, to contemplate humane life, and trace mankind thro' all the wilderness of their frailties and misfortunes, from their cradles to their grave. I have reflected on the shortness of
our

94 *A Critical Review of the*

our duration here, and that I was but one of the millions who had been employ'd in the same manner, in ruminating on the trophies of mortality before me; that I must moulder to dust in the same manner, and quit the scene to a new generation, without leaving the shadow of my existence behind me; that this huge fabric, this sacred repository of fame and grandeur, would only be the stage for the same performances; would receive new accessions of noble dust; would be adorn'd with other sepulchres of cost and magnificence; would be crouded with successive admirers; and at last, by the unavoidable decays of time, bury the whole collection of antiquities in general obscurity, and be the monument of its own ruin.

Yet in spite of these sage reflections, this plain prospect of general decay, I must own, 'tis a great pleasure to me to see a new statue added to the last; to see another name of glory increasing the catalogue: 'tis a taste I am particularly fond of, and what I congratulate the present age for encouraging so much. I am always one of the first to survey a new monument, to criticise on its beauties, and point out its defects. I have sometimes the pleasure of observing a beauty, and often a fault in our modern artists; and should be glad to take an occasion of applauding the first, and mending the last. I would have all works of ornament perfectly beautiful and elegant; or else they disappoint

appoint the very intent of their being. I would have all *statuary*, in a peculiar manner, excellent. A polite people are most distinguish'd as such, by their buildings, their statues, and their inscriptions; and I am sorry to say it, we are generally defective in all. There is one noble *Lord* amongst us indeed, who has taken great pains, and been at vast expence, in improving our taste in one of these particulars; but I don't find so eminent an example has influenc'd many more to an emulation of what has done him so much honour. In a word, *sepulchral monuments* should be always consider'd as the last publick tribute which is paid to virtue; as a proof of our regard for noble characters; and most particularly, as an excitement to others to emulate the great example. In a word, I can't look upon that which is rais'd over the ashes of Sir *Isaac Newton* in any other light: his honours were all owing to his own merit; neither is it in the power of the finest statue, or the sublimest inscription, to afford him any addition. Had his *remains* rested without a *name*, like *Milton*, or *Shakespear*, or *Shaftsbury*, or *Nassau*, 'twould have been a new reproach to an ungrateful people, but no injury to him. On the other hand, the utmost magnificence of funeral honours would only be a credit to us, without doing him any service. Having lately observ'd that this stately *mausoleum* had made the entrance into the choir irregular; 'twas answer'd, that if we waited

96 *A Critical Review of the*

waited for an *equal name* among the *moderns* to make it uniform, 'twould hardly be so to eternity; and if an inferior was to be rang'd with him, 'twould be a disadvantage to both. 'Tis most certain, that there are few *characters* that approach any thing near to an *equality*, and the many vain trials that have been made for his *epitaph*, are the highest compliment to his desert: 'tis a proof that language was too weak to express it, and hyperbole itself too faint for the admiration that was due to his accomplishments.

Gray's-Inn is certainly too considerable a place to be pass'd over unobserv'd: but the notice we shall take of it, will be rather in compliment to what it might have been made, not what it is at present; 'tis no more than a confus'd heap of ugly buildings that have neither order, regularity or connection, and yet the ground they stand on was capable of all: they might have had a fine, open front to the street, and another to the gardens, and that too with as little expence: but the taste of our ancestors did not seem to be altogether fix'd on beauty, and we ourselves make but very slow advances towards a reformation. As to the gardens belonging to this *inn*, they are certainly an advantage to the students there, and a convenience to the town in general; and if they have not many beauties to entertain you, they have few absurdities to disgust you: 'tis true indeed they might be made much better than they are, by keeping

ing the vistas full of trees, the walks smooth, and the borders even. The mount and summer-house upon the top of it, might be made quite delightful, and if the two portico's at the ends of the terras, had been in taste, they would have given an air of magnificence, which at present is much wanting. I could wish too that the piece of ground, between the two terrases and the road, was made better use of by the society, than turning it into a kitchen-garden, as well as that next *Gray's-Inn-Lane*: these two spots might have been covered with trees, in the most beautiful manner, and supplied with fountains, which would make this place one of the most delightful spots about town.

Bedford-Row is one of the most noble streets that *London* has to boast of, and yet there is not one house in it which deserves the least attention: even that side of the way next the gardens, is remarkable for nothing but its regularity; the buildings themselves being void of all symmetry and proportion, and in a taste altogether Gothic and clumsy: yet after all, if the house, which projects into the middle of the street, and spoils the beauty of the whole vista, were levelled, we should forget this particular defect, to admire the grandeur and length of the whole.

Ormond-street is another place of pleasure, and that side of it next the fields is, beyond question, one of the most charming situations about town.

Powis-House, at the end of it, is a building of much beauty and elegance, the lower part of it, in particular, has a very good claim to applause, but then the Attick story is monstrous, out of proportion, and no way a-kin to taste. To this we may add, that the house itself is pent up for want of room, and stands greatly in need of wings, to make it perfect and compleat.

Queen's-Square is an area of a peculiar kind, being left open on one side, for the sake of the beautiful landscape, which is form'd by the hills of *Highbate* and *Hampstead*, together with the adjacent fields; a delicacy which deserves some approbation, both as 'tis an advantage to the inhabitants, and a beauty even with regard to the square itself.

Southampton-Row is a range of buildings, which seems to have been built only for the sake of the prospect before it, and for such who prefer no conveniency to that, no situation can be more happy; but for my own part, I should be uneasy in residing there, for want of shelter from the wind in winter, and the sun in summer.

Bloombsbury-Square is at present remarkable for nothing but its being a place capable of great improvements: there is not one tolerable house in it, and the area in the middle is almost as much neglected as the buildings. The ground on which the Duke of *Bedford's* house now stands is, beyond dispute, one of the finest situations

ations in *Europe* for a palace, and I am not a little griev'd to see it so wretchedly misemployed. In the first place, it has one whole side of a square for a front, and the square itself would serve as a magnificent area before it: then there is a grand street just opposite to it, which throws the prospect of it open to *Holborn*, and must excite the curiosity of every passenger, to regard and admire it. Then, behind, it has the advantage of most agreeable gardens, and a view of the country, which would make a retreat from town almost unnecessary; beside the opportunity of exhibiting another prospect of the building, which would enrich the landscape, and challenge new approbation.

'Twill be impossible to pass by the new church of *St. George, Bloomsbury*, without giving it a very particular survey: 'tis built all of stone, is adorn'd with a pompous portico, can boast many other decorations, has been stinted in no expence; and yet, upon the whole, is ridiculous and absurd even to a proverb. The reason is this, the builder mistook whim for genius, and ornament for taste: he has even err'd so much, that the very portico does not seem to be in the middle of the church, and as to the steeple, it is stuck on like a wen to the rest of the building; then the execrable conceit of setting up the King on the top of it, excites nothing but laughter in the ignorant, and contempt in the judge. In short, 'tis a lasting reflection on the fame of

the architect, and the understanding of those who employed him.

Montague-House has been long, but very ridiculously esteem'd one of the most beautiful buildings about town: I must own 'tis grand and expensive, will admit of very noble ranges of apartments within, and fully answers all the dignity of a *British Nobleman* of the first rank: but after I have allow'd this, I must add, that the entrance into the court-yard is mean and Gothic; more like the portal of a monastery than the gate of a palace, and the cupola over it is even still more contemptible and absurd: I am ready to confess the area spacious and grand, and the colonnade to the wings, graceful and harmonious; but then the wings themselves are no way equal to it, and the body of the house has no other recommendation than merely its bulk, and the quantity of space it fills: it is my opinion, that the height is not equal to the length, and that the roof and garrets are both a load to the fabrick, and absurd in themselves; that the windows are too large and numerous, that decorations are wanting, and that the whole front is defective both in beauty and variety.

The new church of *St. Giles's* is one of the most simple and elegant of the modern structures: it is rais'd at very little expence, has very few ornaments, and little beside the propriety of its parts, and the harmony of the whole, to excite attention, and challenge applause: yet still
it

it pleases, and justly too; the east end is both plain and majestic, and there is nothing in the west to object to but the smallness of the doors, and the poverty of appearance that must necessarily follow. The steeple is light, airy, and genteel, argues a good deal of genius in the architect, and looks very well both in comparison with the body of the church, and when 'tis consider'd as a building by itself, in a distant prospect. Yet after all I have confess'd in favour of this edifice, I can't help again arraigning the superstition of situating churches due east and west; for, in complaisance to this folly, the building before us has lost a great advantage it might have otherwise enjoy'd; I mean the making the east end the front, and placing it in such a manner, as to have ended the vista of what is call'd *Broad St. Giles's*; whereas, now, it is no where to be seen with ease to the eye, or so, as justly to comprehend the symmetry and connection of the whole.

The square, commonly call'd *Soho*, is the next place which claims any regard, and that too, like most of the other things of the like nature, in this city, only because it is a square; the buildings round it are not scandalous, 'tis true, but they have not the least pretensions to taste or order: it has beside a little, contemptible garden in the middle of the area, and a worse statue, if it be possible, in the middle of that. The place, indeed, is not so intirely neglected,

as

as many others of the same sort about town, and therefore deserves the less censure; if it is not entitled to praise. My Lord *Bateman's* house, on the south side, is built at a good deal of expence, and was meant for something grand and magnificent; but I am afraid the architect had a very slender notion of what either of them meant: there is nothing very shining in any part of this structure; but if the lower order could boast of beauties ever so exquisite, the upper is so Gothique and absurd, that it would destroy them all, and invective would get the start of approbation.

Great Marlborough-Street is esteemed one of the finest in *Europe*; but I think it can have this character on no other account but its length and breadth; the buildings on each side being trifling and inconsiderable, and the vista ended neither way with any thing great or extraordinary: a circumstance which ought to be always consider'd, where the nature of the ground will give it leave; for nothing can possibly give a greater advantage to the view, than something beautiful or magnificent to terminate it; and magnificence or beauty cannot be admir'd as they ought, without a suitable distance to blend all the parts together, and present the whole to the eye at once.

I can find no other fault with the Duke of *Queensborough's* house, but that 'tis badly situated, overagainst a dead wall, and in a lane
that

that is unworthy of so grand a building : to which we may add, that it wants wings, and must ever do so, because there is not room to make so necessary and graceful an addition. This fabrick is evidently in the stile of *Inigo Jones*, and not at all unworthy the school of that great master : a beautiful imitation is of abundantly more value than a bad original ; and he that could copy excellency so well, could not want a great deal of his own.

The first four houses, opposite to the Duke of *Queensborough's* stable-gate, are, beyond comparison, in the finest taste of any common buildings we can see any where : without the least affectation of ornament, or seeming design at any remarkable elegance, they have all the elegance that can be given to such a design, and need no ornament to make them remarkable. In a word, I would recommend this row as a sample of the most perfect kind for our modern architects to follow ; and if none of our squares had a worse set of edifices in them than these, we should never regret the want of a better.

General *Wade's* house, in the next street parallel to this, is a structure, which tho' small, and little taken notice of, is one of the best things among the new buildings : the general design, or plan, is intirely chaste and simple ; and yet the execution is pompous and expensive : indeed the whole house is one continued cluster of ornament, and yet there is no body can say there is

too much, or that he desires to have any part remov'd out of the way: let me add, 'tis the only fabrick in miniature I ever saw; where decorations were perfectly proportion'd to the space they were to fill, and did not by their multiplicity, or some other mistake, incumber the whole.

There is nothing in the whole prodigious length of the two *Bond-streets*, or in any of the adjacent places, tho' almost all erected within our memories, that has any thing worth our attention; several little, wretched attempts there are at foppery in building, but they are even too inconsiderable for censure.

There is something particular in the manner of *George-street*, which deserves our attention; it being laid out so considerably wider at the upper end, towards *Hanover-square*, that it quite reverses the perspective, and shews the end of the vista broader than the beginning; which was calculated to give a nobler view of the square itself at the entrance, and a better prospect down the street from the other side: both ways the effect answers the intention, and we have only to lament, that the buildings themselves are not more worthy this pains to shew them to advantage. The west-side of *Hanover-Square* is uniform, argues a very tolerable taste in the architect, and deserves a good deal of approbation; but all the rest are intolerable, and deserve no attention at all.

I must own this, however, that the view down *George-street*, from the upper side of the square, is one of the most entertaining in the whole city: the sides of the square, the area in the middle, the breaks of building that form the entrance of the vista, the vista itself, but, above all, the beautiful projection of the portico of *St. George's-Church*, are all circumstances that unite in beauty, and make the scene perfect.

If any thing is wanting, 'tis a graced building at the end of the vista; and the chapel which now stands there, afforded a handsome opportunity, even for adding this too, if the undertakers had taste or generosity enough to make the best use of it.

The church of *St. George's* is, at least, one of the most elegant in *London*: the portico is stately and august, the steeple handsome, and well proportion'd, and the north and east prospects very well worth a sincere approbation: but even this structure is no where to be seen, but in profile, as mentioned above, tho' situated in the very centre of the vista that leads to *Grosvenor-square*, and were it not for two or three intervening houses, would be seen in the noblest point of light in the world. In short, it would fill the eye quite from the other side of that square in all its perfection; and I leave any one to judge to what superior advantage it

P

would

would then appear, and how many more beauties it would add to the prospect.

We must now cross the road to *Oxford*, or *Cavendish-square*; I am uncertain by which of those names it is most properly distinguish'd, and there we shall see the folly of attempting great things, before we are sure we can accomplish little ones. Here 'tis, the modern plague of building was first stay'd, and I think the rude, unfinish'd figure of this project should deter others from a like infatuation. When we see any thing like grandeur or beauty going forward, we are uneasy till 'tis finish'd, but when we see it interrupted, or intirely laid aside, we are not only angry with the disappointment, but the author too: I am morally assur'd that more people are displeas'd at seeing this square lie in its present neglected condition, than are entertain'd with what was meant for elegance or ornament in it. To be free, no body should undertake things of this publick nature, without resolving to go thro' with them; for the declining it afterwards is so notorious, that the whole world has occasion to blame it, tho' few or none can be sufficiently acquainted with the motives, so as either to defend or absolve.

It is said, the imperfect side of this square was laid out for a certain Nobleman's palace, which was to have extended the whole length; and that the two detach'd houses, which now stand at each end of the line, were to have been the

the wings; I am apt to believe this can be no other than a vulgar mistake, for these structures, tho' exactly alike, could have been no way of a piece with any regular or stately building; and 'tis to be presum'd this Nobleman would have as little attempted any other, as he would have left any attempt unfinish'd.

The house of the late Lord *Bingley*, on the west side of the square, is one of the most singular pieces of architecture about town; in my opinion 'tis rather like a convent than the residence of a man of quality, and seems more a copy of some of *Poussin's* landscape-ornaments, than a design to imitate any of the genuine beauties of building. I may be mistaken perhaps in my opinion, and what I esteem Gothicque, heavy and fantastick, may really be harmonious, light and elegant: so I leave the determination of it to better judges.

I have now brought this painful *survey* almost to an end, and am not a little pleas'd on that account: it was not so easy a task as I at first imagin'd, and whoever will make it their guide to measure the same ground, will be of the same opinion: huge indeed as this city is, the toil of examining it from place to place, is the least; for a building ought to be view'd several times before we come to a conclusion, either with regard to its faults or beauties: part of that trouble this *Review* was design'd to save, and if it will not polish the taste, or reform

the judgment, 'twill serve however as an index to the *Publick Buildings*, &c. and point out to the stranger whatever is worthy of his attention.

Grosvenor-square is not only the last addition which has been made to the town, but the last in situation too; and as 'tis generally understood to be the finest of all our squares, I am sorry I have the opportunity to say it has so few advantages to recommend it, and that the publick is dispos'd to like these few so well: I have frequently observ'd already, that magnificence should never be attempted; it ought always to be perfect and compleat, or else the very essay mocks the builder, and excites ridicule instead of admiration. This is the case of *Grosvenor-square*; it was meant to be very fine, but has miscarried very unfortunately in the execution: there is no harmony or agreement in the parts which compose it, neither is there one of those parts which can make us any thing like amends for the irregularity of the whole. The triple house, of the north side, is a wretched attempt at something extraordinary; but I hope not many people, beside the purchasers, are deceiv'd in their opinions of its merits; for 'tis not only bad in itself, but in its situation too; had it been in the centre of the line, there would have been some excuse for the project, but as 'tis almost in one extreme, there can be no plea remaining; unless

unless the view of taking in some young heir to buy it, at a great rate, may be allow'd one.

The *east side* is the only regular one of the four, and is undoubtedly much the most elegant for that reason; but then even this is not in taste, and neither the house in the middle, nor the two which serve as wings, have any thing remarkable to recommend them, tho' the builder seems to design they should: the pediment over that in the middle, particularly, is proportion'd only to the breadth of that house, and not the entire line; whereby it appears that the artist forgot his first design, of making this the main body to the whole.

The other two sides are little better than a collection of whims, and frolicks in building, without any thing like order or beauty, and therefore deserving no farther consideration.

As to the area in the midst: 'tis certainly laid out in a very expensive taste, and hitherto kept with great decency and neatness: the making it circular is new in design, and happy in effect: the statue in the centre makes a very good appearance in prospect, and is a fine decoration: but, in itself, is no way admirable, or deserving applause. The inclosure round this area is clumsy, and the brick-work not only superfluous, but a blemish to the view it was intended to preserve and adorn.

I have often wonder'd that, in the number of squares, which adorn this city, no builder e-

ver thought of an octangular one ; I am fully persuaded that it would make a nobler figure than any we have seen yet, and is capable of greater beauties: 'tis to be observ'd tho', that I would not have it broke at the angles, for the sake of the streets or entrances, because that would spoil the theatrical appearance of the whole: I would rather chuse to have all those inlets under an arch, in the centre of each particular side, and if the superstructure was elevated proportionably, in a grand and noble stile, what was principally meant as a conveniency, would prove one of the most magnificent ornaments in the world.

I would not be understood here, as recommending any farther additions to this mighty metropolis ; no, I am of opinion the head is already much too big for the body, and therefore its farther growth cannot be check'd too soon. But this I leave to the determination of wiser heads than mine.

I shall close this *essay* with some remarks on *architecture* in general ; which I find ready drawn to my hand in the preface to a book lately publish'd, under the title of *The BUILDER'S DICTIONARY**. A book which contains the elements of the whole art, and which 'tis necessary every judge, as well as artist, should understand.

Archi-

* This is the *Dictionary* recommended by Mess. *Hawksmoor, James, and Gibbs.*

Architecture is one of those arts which necessity has made universal: from the time that men first felt the inclemencies of the seasons, it had its beginning; and accordingly it has spread wheresoever the severities of the climate demanded shelter or shade: it is to be traced in the *Indian's* hut, and the *Icelander's* cave; and still shews, in those barbarous parts of the globe, from what mean original it rose to its present glory.

As distress was the parent of it, so convenience was the first object it regarded: magnificence and decoration were the result of some long refinement, and designed to flatter the ostentation of the owners: politeness is but a more delicate term for luxury; and was it not natural for men to grow wanton with ease and affluence, all the sciences in general had laid inactive, nor ever started into being.

'Tis easy to conclude from hence, that *convenience* should still be the builder's first view: every structure is rais'd to answer some particular end; and the most obvious and simple means are always the best to obtain it. When such a plan as this is uniformly and consistently laid; when all its uses may be comprehended at a single glance, and all appear undeniably reasonable and perfect; then the artist is at liberty to add grandeur and elegance to strength and propriety, and finish the whole with the full splendour of beauty and grace.

By

By this division of *architecture* into beauty and use, it will be demonstrable to every reader, that 'tis partly an art, and partly a science; that the first is mechanical, and the last the result of genius and superior understanding: one calls in all the aid of fancy and imagination, grows poetical in design, and picturesque in decoration; the other lays down fix'd and stated rules, proceeds in the same invariable tract of reasoning, and comes always to the same conclusions. Hence it happens, that many an excellent workman has proved himself a mere mechanick; and many a surprizing genius, that he was ignorant of the very principles of the art he made it his profession to understand. To make a thorough master, both must be united; for the propriety of a plan is seldom attended to, and seldomer understood; and a glaring pile of beauty, without use, mocks the possessor with a dream of grandeur he can never enjoy.

After this short introduction, the author proceeds to point out what are the true foundations of this noble art, and begins first with *arithmetick*, as being the ground-work of mensuration, either as to extent or solidity, as being the medium of all calculations, and the only road to any degree of practical knowledge in the mathematicks.

Geometry follows in the next place, and is indeed the foundation that all students must build upon, since 'tis impossible to attain to any perfection

fection in *architecture* without it: 'tis *geometry* that lays down all the first principles in building, that adjusts all bearings and proportions, and measures points, angles, and solidities. In short, there is no being a master of architecture, without being perfect in all the parts of *geometry*; and he that is so, tho' he may err in decoration, can never do the same, either in strength or proportion.

Masonry, or the mechanical means of raising perpendiculars, turning arches, erecting bridges, and forming stair-cases, is another branch of this art, and must be understood with great accuracy and readiness; as being the execution of the whole which the student desires to learn.

Levelling and *Hydraulicks*, are likewise of great importance to the builder: the first at once enabling him to understand good situations, or amend them if they are otherwise: and the last, of course, directing the conveyance of water, the draining of low grounds, and teaching the whole secrets of collecting reservoirs, or afterwards employing them to the best advantage. In short, on these depend both the necessary use of water for family supply, and also all the beautiful effects that can result from it in gardens, by basons, fountains, cascades, &c.

Mechanicks is another essential in this noble art. 'Tis by understanding their power and

Q

effect,

effect, that such machines are contriv'd, as alone are able to raise up the heavy materials to buildings of any considerable height, or empty waters from a bottom, or drain a level, or force them upwards, as art would direct, or necessity require.

These, with the art of *sketching* and *drawing*, are all the different branches of study which are necessary to form a compleat mechanical architect. But when he is thoroughly initiated in them all, so as not to err, even in principles or practice, if he cannot add as much knowledge more of his own, in their use and application, he will be fit for nothing more than the overseer of a work, or a judge of the mere methods to carry on and finish the whole.

The science of *designing* is still wanting to form a great master, or produce such plans as would vie with the antient beauties of *Greece* and *Rome*. But if this is not in the genius, it is never to be learn'd. To be able to enter into this secret, the student must have great natural parts, a noble and fruitful imagination, a thorough insight and acquaintance with beauty, and judgment sedate and cool enough to form a just and delicate taste. Without taste, even genius itself wanders blindfold, and spends itself in vain. Genius is, indeed, the first quality of the soul; but taste must be added, or we shall censure the wildness, instead of admiring the

the beauty; we shall be dissatisfied with the irregularity, instead of being pleased with the magnificence.

But tho' genius cannot be learn'd, it may be improv'd: and tho' the gift of *designing* is born with a man, it may be methodized by study and observation.

The principal points, therefore, that the *designer* should have in view, are first convenience, as has been hinted at already, and then beauty and magnificence. With regard to convenience, few directions can be given, since it means no more than contriving all the requisites belonging to your plan, in the most clear and elegant manner, and then laying out the space they are to be ranged in with the most perfect order and oeconomy. As to beauty and magnificence, they are themes never to be exhausted; and tho' many volumes have been written on them already, as many more might still be added.

Simplicity is generally understood to be the ground-work of beauty, and decoration of magnificence. 'Tis certain, the fewer parts a building is composed of, if they are harmonized with elegance and proportion, the more beautiful it appears: the eye is best satisfied with seeing the whole at once, not in travelling from object to object; for then the whole is comprehended with pain and difficulty, the attention is broken, and we forget one moment what we had observed another.

116 *A Critical Review of the*

But a *contrast of figure* must be preserved even in the midst of this simplicity 'Tis in a building, as in musick; the parts are various and disagreeing in themselves, till reconcil'd by the skill and judgment of the master. A sameness of form betrays a poverty of imagination; and is the same in architecture, as dullness in writing: the mind is glutted with it instantly, and turns away dissatisfy'd. It is therefore a principal thing to be regarded by the student, to design simply and variously at the same time, and beauty will infallibly be the result of the whole.

Perspective is another grand part of *designing*; which demands the master's most critical regard, in as much as nothing contributes more to grandeur and beauty, if well understood; and nothing is understood with more difficulty and study. By perspective, is commonly meant the thorough inside prospect of a building: but if it can't be applied with propriety to the art, we would take the liberty of substituting the painter's word *keeping* in the stead of it. For in all buildings, as in pictures, there must be one principal figure, to which all the others must be subordinate; and from whence you must set out to examine the parts, and to which you must return to determine the whole.

Decoration, or choice and disposition of ornaments, is the last grand requisite to make a compleat architect: and this depends partly on
genius,

genius, and partly on fancy ; but both must be under the conduct of the severest judgment and exactest taste. In short, all ornaments are ill-plac'd, that may be spared without being missed ; as all empty spaces are absurd, where nakedness hurts the eye, and propriety would admit of decoration.

We can't sufficiently recommend to all persons, who build sumptuously, to calculate their buildings according to the point of light from whence they are to be viewed. If they may, or should be seen from far, their parts should be simple, great, and noble ; if the prospect is near, the workmanship should be neat and little, that it may be seen and understood, as the nature of its situation will give leave.

Upon the whole, nothing but nature, and a long study of the antient and modern structures, will enrich the mind sufficiently to excel in this noble art ; and this *dictionary* will be found a proper key to explain their beauties, as well as a needful caution to avoid their defects.





SUPPLEMENT.



GUILD-HALL is situated very happily, in sight of the most frequented thoroughfare in the whole city, and at the end of a very tolerable vista, which shews the building in the most favourable manner: but at present, the front of it has not much title to this advantage: 'tis old and Gothique, and has no great matter in it either of design or execution. The hall within, I acknowledge a very fine room, allowing for the taste 'tis built in; but then the entrance should have been at the lower end, and not in the middle; for by this means all the beauty of the perspective is lost. Another material defect in it, is this: the ascent of steps on the other side, is not exactly opposite to the gate, as it ought to be, both for the sake of regularity and beauty; and if those two execrable giants, on each side of it, were taken down, 'twould argue more taste in those who destroyed them, than those who set them up.

I should have been quite unpardonable, in not mentioning *Surgeon's-Hall* and *Theatre*: both, as I think, built by *Inigo Jones*, and tho' most obscurely situated, better deserving notice and regard, than many glaring piles, which have the advantage of being more publick. The hall is plain, but elegant; the arch at the entrance beautiful, and the alcove, at the end, in the most perfect taste. The theatre is beyond dispute a masterpiece, and tho' as simple as 'tis possible, both in design and finishing, fruitful in beauties, and affording the spectator the highest satisfaction. If I don't very much mistake, these edifices were repair'd and beautified by the direction, and at the expence of my Lord *Burlington*. A compliment not greater than is due to *Inigo Jones*; but the greatest any modern can receive, or any modern bestow.

F I N I S.



I should have been quite unprepared, in not
 mentioning to you, I am and always shall be
 I am, built by my own, and the most ob-
 servant, better observing, honest, and
 good, than many others, which have the
 advantage of being more perfect. The fall
 in plain, but elegant, the richness of the
 beauty, and the soft, of the land, in the
 most perfect state. The theatre is beyond the
 into a magnificent, and in as much as it is
 like, I am in the way to be in the
 I am, and all being the best of the
 old, in the way to be in the
 this to be a very good, and in the
 motion, and in the way to be in the
 to be in the way to be in the
 to be in the way to be in the
 to be in the way to be in the



3 11 V 1 1



